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Spatiality, Political Identities and the  
Environmentalism of the Poor

Thesis submitted for the award of Doctor of  
Philosophy in the Geography discipline of the  
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## **Spatiality, Political Identities and the Environmentalism of the Poor**

### **Abstract:**

This thesis takes issue with the claims of the radical centre that political ecology is a domain which can be negotiated by the formation of a broad but radical consensus. It uses studies of three contemporary and historical social/ political movements which have linked environmentalism and social inequality to develop a focus on the 'ineradicability of antagonism' in political ecology. It argues that this necessitates a stress on the constitutive role of power and spatiality. These movements are firstly, the UK land rights campaign, the Land is Ours and its mobilisation of a diverse political constituency around a site of 'waste land' in Wandsworth, London. Secondly, a project called the Inter-continental Caravan, which united activists from the Indian New Farmer's Movements and activists from Western European green movements to contest the unequal social and environmental relations of contemporary neo-liberal globalisation. Thirdly, the political activity of the Whiteboys, an eighteenth century Irish peasant movement which contested the enclosure of common land. This case-study is written with particular emphasis on the relation of the Whiteboys to Atlantic routes of radical ideas and experience and develops an account of their influence on the London Port Strikes of 1768.

This approach has enabled a focus on the agency of marginalised groups in contesting the unequal processes shaping the production of environments and on the complex histories and geographies of such agency. The thesis seeks to open up and scrutinize questions about the political identities formed through linking environmental questions with concerns relating to social justice. It seeks to engage with how movements imagine and contest spatially stretched power relations. It argues that the way these power relations are imagined and the way movements perform distinctive 'spaces of politics' has effects on the kinds of political identities that emerge through their activities.

# **Spatiality, Political Identities and the Environmentalism of the Poor**

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## **Chapter 1:**

### **Introduction: The Depoliticisation of Political Ecology and Environmentalisms of the Poor.**

#### **1.1 Environmentalisms of the Poor**

A set of social and political movements and alliances have become prominent which link environmental struggles with struggles for social justice. These struggles have challenged the frequent separation of environmentalism from questions of poverty. Their diverse political engagements have cut across and challenged the legitimacy of divisions which have powerfully shaped both contemporary political practices and ways of theorising social and political movements. These struggles have contested the established definitions of what counts as environmental politics and have challenged some of the élitist assumptions that structure contemporary environmental organisations. They have begun to articulate and explore the kinds of politics and mobilisations that might occur through attempts to tackle together environmental questions and concerns relating to social justice.

There are diverse examples of these engagements. The movement against 'environmental racism' in the United States has contested the disproportionately high frequency of location of hazardous waste sites in poor, black and Hispanic communities.<sup>1</sup> Through their activity they have challenged the established environmental lobby in the US, which dismissed these struggles as not 'adequately "environmental"' (Di Chiro, 1996: 299). US Earth First! activists have joined with steel workers in the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment 'to build a partnership fighting for the protection of both people and planet' (Brecher, Costello and Smith, 2000: 50). Their mobilisation under the slogan 'Teamsters and Turtles together at last' was one of the most powerful and innovative aspects of the actions against the World Trade Organisation in Seattle in 1999 (Cockburn and St Clair, 2000: 17). Farmers and peasant movements in India like the Karnataka State Farmers Union (KRRS) have attacked the social inequality and the environmental impact of the introduction of genetically modified seeds. In the UK some of the most creative engagements of the contemporary direct action movement have been those which have contested the environmental and social injustices of building new roads within poor urban areas.

These social and political movements articulate an 'environmentalism of the poor' (Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1997; Escobar, 1996). They are defined by linking struggles over environmentalism and poverty. This thesis explores the diverse ways that marginalised groups and movements have engaged with 'environments' and have

contested dominant uses and definitions of 'environments'. Throughout the thesis I have adopted the plural 'environmentalisms of the poor' to signify the diverse and contested engagements of these social and political movements. The activity of these movements has impacted on and changed the kinds of issue that are seen to count as 'environmental problems'. Examining these struggles can situate the activity of marginalised or subaltern groups as productive. I use the term subaltern to suggest plural forms of marginality and inequality, rather than suggesting that class is the only defining structure of inequality. The study opens up a set of questions about how subaltern groups have engaged with unequally produced environments and about the character of these interventions. These questions form the main problematic of this thesis.

The thesis is an investigation of the histories and geographies of subaltern engagements with environments and the character of these engagements. It seeks to open up and scrutinize questions about the political identities formed through linking environmental questions with concerns of social justice. It argues and demonstrates that the involvement of marginalised groups in disputes around political ecology can be productive and generative rather than just being a passive negotiation of the claims of different experts or being determined by a narrow belly materialism. To engage with the productive character of these subaltern engagements, this thesis takes issue with the claims of the radical centre that political ecology is a domain which can be negotiated by the formation of a broad but radical consensus. It challenges these arguments through using studies of three contemporary and historical social/ political movements that have linked environmentalism and social inequality. These studies suggest that environmental politics is not a domain where power relations are excluded or absent. Rather the thesis argues that marginalised groups have constructed political agency through rendering as antagonisms the processes whereby unequally structured social and environmental relations are produced. The thesis engages with the diverse histories and geographies of such agency.

## **1.2 Political Identities, Spatiality and Relations of Power**

One of the common aspects of these environmentalisms of the poor is that they relate environmental struggles to a critique of unequal power relations. This is a significant challenge to many forms of environmentalism. Enzensberger in a discussion of the forms of political ecology which were emerging in the early 1970s noted that they tended to abstract ecological issues from wider political and social relations (Enzensberger, 1976). These forms of political ecology often couched their analysis of ecological problems within Malthusian discourses which blamed marginalised groups for ecological problems

(for an influential example see Hardin, 1971: 47-65). These Neo-Malthusian writers sought solutions for ecological problems within the structures of modern liberal democracies and denied the existence of power relations which structured these societies in unequal ways. This resulted in a 'depoliticization of the ecological question' and an eradication of its 'social components and consequences' (Enzensberger, 1976: 286-7).

This depoliticisation of environmentalism has proved to be enduring. Members of the German Green Party entered the Bundestag in 1983 with the slogan 'Neither left nor right-but straight ahead' (Spretnak and Capra, 1985). They preferred to present themselves as transcending political division rather than as making a direct political intervention (see also Williams, 1989: 218-9). An approach to political ecology which actively defines itself against conflict and antagonism has recently become a central part of the emerging Third Way political agenda in the UK. Anthony Giddens has argued that the 'radicalism' needed to tackle ecological problems 'can in principle command widespread consensus' (Giddens, 1998: 45). Giddens's consensual construction of political ecology, however, rests on an assumption that ecological politics is about the evaluation of the competing claims of different experts (Wynne, 1996: 48, see also Giddens, 1994a: 86-7). This reduction of ecological politics to an assessment of the claims of different experts erases the agency of marginalised groups from shaping how environmental politics is constituted and conducted. A rejection of this position can make this agency more explicit. For as Wynne suggests 'expert dissent is often only encouraged and sustained by the existence of a public backcloth of scepticism or alienation' (Wynne, 1996: 48-9).

This thesis argues that to engage with the agency of environmentalisms of the poor involves rejecting an account of environmental politics as a consensual domain. I have drawn on the political theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe to reject the consensual construction of the political implicit in the proposals of the radical centre, and in much critical theory. Laclau and Mouffe's work emerges from an attempt to reformulate a socialist politics in the wake of the emergence of new 'antagonisms' which have challenged the entire basis of the left wing political project (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). They have argued that the emergence of antagonisms articulated around questions of gender, sexualities, ethnicity and ecological politics involves a 'reformulation of the socialist ideal in terms of an extension and deepening of democracy' (Laclau and Mouffe, n.d.). They describe these positions as a radical democratic politics (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Four elements of their radical democratic political theory are central to the arguments developed in this thesis.

Firstly, their political theory argues that power relations should not be excluded from the political. They argue that power relations are constitutive of the very identities negotiated through political practices (Mouffe, 2000: 21). This thesis draws on this work to adopt a definition of political activity as the ongoing, negotiation of power relations. Secondly, rather than viewing the political as the negotiation of already constituted 'interests' they argue that political processes are active in constituting political identities. Thirdly, they see the political and the social as defined not by consensus but by a plurality of antagonisms. Their use of antagonism varies considerably across their work. In this thesis I develop a use of antagonism to signify a conflictual relation which is characterised by few or no shared terms of debate. I also develop Laclau and Mouffe's insistence that the political is riven by multiple antagonisms. This means that the political can never be the site of the formation of a stable consensus and that all forms of consensus are constructed through exclusion. Lastly, they argue that through the formation of chains of equivalence between those struggling against different forms of oppression different antagonisms can be articulated to form 'collective political wills' (Mouffe, 1988: 99, Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 152-159). These equivalences are not an alliance of fixed interests. Rather they are practices of solidarity which unsettle fixed and particularistic identities to produce new and open political identities.

This focus on the formation of equivalences develops a stress on the 'relational construction of the political'. They argue that political identities are not formed in isolation but in relation to other forms of political activity and identities. This suggests the importance of examining how connections are formed and negotiated between diverse political actors. Here I refer to this process as articulation, drawing on Haraway's definition of articulation as 'the power to produce connection' (Haraway, 1992: 325). This definition rejects the narrowly linguistic focus of many theories of articulation. It engages with the ways specific political antagonisms and issues become connected to different political positions. This thesis develops an account of the relational construction of the political through thinking the political in an explicitly spatial way. The potential productiveness of spatial engagements with Laclau and Mouffe's work have been suggested by many geographers (see Massey, 1995, 1999, Robinson, 1998, Pinder, 1998: 90). Applying spatial thinking to radical democratic theory, however, involves a reconceptualisation of the relationship between spatiality and the political.

Spatiality has been constructed as the opposite of politics (Laclau, 1990: 68). In the imagery of progressive politics, the spatial has been subordinated to the revolutionary forces of time<sup>2</sup> or considered to be important merely because class struggle 'needs a



terrain' (Midnight Notes Collective, 1990: 6). If the political is to be thought of as the site of a plurality of antagonisms, a different way of conceptualising the relationships between spatiality and politics is necessary. This is because spatiality is a condition of the existence of multiplicity (Massey, 1999: 28-9). The multiplicity of ways of articulating antagonisms is made possible by the existence of multiple and co-existing trajectories of political engagement and activity. This involves reconfiguring the way that Laclau and Mouffe approach questions of identity and interrelation. It also makes spatiality 'integral to the constitution of political subjectivities' (Massey, 1999: 29).

Viewing spatiality and the political as co-constitutive has important implications for the theorisation of the agency of political struggles. Thinking through these challenges is one of the central theoretical concerns of this thesis. The thesis argues that if space is not to be treated as a surface which pre-exists political activity then spatial relations need to be viewed as constituted and reconstituted through political activity. This permits a conceptualisation of political agency as produced through the specific ways that political struggles intervene in, engage with and reconstitute dominant forms of spatial relations. The character of political identities is also constituted through the forms of intervention they make in spatial relations and through the spatial practices through which their politics is enacted. The thesis uses this emphasis on the spatial practices of the political to argue against the tendency to temporalise difference in political subjectivities. This draws on Calhoun's critique of new social movement theorists for exaggerating the extent to which the labour movement 'ever was a unified historical actor with a single narrative and a disciplining institutional structure' (Calhoun, 1995: 178, see also Hetherington, 1998).

This thesis also argues that the political activity of different environmentalisms of the poor cuts across the divisions of the social and the natural. The spatial practices of their politics constantly mix up and combine elements of the 'social' and the 'natural'. This involves a reworking of how the political is thought. The political has been theorised as a domain concerned purely with the negotiation of social relations and which is defined through the exclusion of questions of the 'natural'. This thesis draws on the body of theory associated with Social Studies of Science/ Actor Network theory to reject these divisions. It draws on Latour's critique of the 'modern constitution' which he argues has adopted a foundational division between the natural and the social (Latour, 1993: 13).

Rejecting this division enables a discussion of how political struggles have formed antagonisms through conflicts which mix up the 'social' and 'natural'. It enables a topography of the political to emerge where political identities are formed through contested relations with non-humans as well as through relationships with the elements

usually categorised as ‘social’. This approach is animated by a concern with the activity of the political. For ongoing political activity recombines elements which are neatly divided in political theory. Foregrounding ‘activity’ can begin to break down the pernicious effects of the divisions introduced in this section on contemporary political imaginaries.

### **1.3 Engaging Contemporary Political Imaginaries**

The first two sections of this chapter have argued that ways of theorising and practising the political have been structured by several key divisions, between a politics of environmentalism and a politics of social justice, between the spatial and the political, and between the social and the natural. These divisions have had limiting effects on contemporary political imaginaries. The thesis engages with the activity of different environmentalisms of the poor as a way of transcending the limiting effects of these divisions on contemporary political imaginaries. It seeks to make connections between struggles over environmentalism and struggles over inequality seem more possible. This thesis engages with a set of theoretical questions relating to the agency of subaltern groups in engaging with ‘environments’. But it also engages with a set of political questions which seek to counter the effects of these divisions on contemporary political imaginaries. Here I want to outline the main points of this political engagement so that it is explicit from the outset. I also want to outline how this political engagement has been negotiated through the conduct of the research.

This research has been structured by a concern with how environmentalism and inequality can be connected together. This emerges from a political engagement which sees the interrelation of these struggles as important and underdeveloped. The research has engaged with ongoing and incomplete attempts to develop connections between environmental struggles and struggles for social justice. This is out of a conviction that emerging activities through which these connections are being formed can animate theoretical and political interventions. This concern with how environmentalism and inequality can be connected together within the logic of one campaign emerged initially from a research project I was involved with at Pollok Free State. Pollok Free State was a road protest against the building of the M77 in a socially deprived part of Glasgow. The politics of the campaign brought issues relating to ecology together with issues relating to the social marginalisation of that part of Glasgow.

Engaging with the forms of political activity at Pollok suggested that the connections made through these forms of protest threatened some of the tidy divisions of social and political theory. It also suggested that the political identities that were emerging around

forms of environmentalisms of the poor were reconfiguring and changing existing conceptions of what counted as environmentalism. I developed these concerns through involvement in the Land is Ours, a land rights campaign which has been active in exploring connections between social justice and environmentalism. The Land is Ours has also explored ways of drawing on the histories of struggles around land to animate contemporary political struggles and identities. This reinforced my interest in thinking about how stories about past struggles might be used creatively. But I have also been concerned to think through how they might be used to disrupt some of the imaginations mobilised by contemporary struggles, especially the fetishisation of small, bounded communities as a privileged alternative to neo-liberal globalisation.

I have tried to develop this engagement with how political activity can renegotiate and reconfigure political engagements. This approach has had implications for the conduct of the research. It has involved being part of the activity of these movements. It has also involved being part of the negotiation of emerging political identities and being alive to the tensions emerging through political activity. This strategy runs counter to influential positions adopted by some 'critical geographers'. Harvey's influential discussion of the 'environment of justice' is significant in arguing that financial circulations should be theorised as part of the constitution of ecosystems. But his discussion imposes a critical direction on 'environmental justice' movements which doesn't examine the imaginative trajectory these movements have taken. Harvey argues that 'movements around the world that loosely come together under the umbrella of environmental justice and the environmentalism of the poor are faced with a critical choice'. He argues they can 'remain within the confines of their own particularist militancies - fighting an incinerator here, a toxic waste dump there, a World bank dam project somewhere else' or they can use these different struggles 'as a fecund nexus to create a more transcendent and universal politics' (Harvey, 1996: 400).

In making this argument, Harvey ignores the political activity through which movements like the campaigns against environmental racism in the US have connected their different struggles to a wider political engagement. Heiman has argued that the US Environmental Justice movement has been characterised by a 'growing rejection of the NIMBY (or Not In My Backyard) label and the embrace [...] of a NIABY (or Not in Anybody's Backyard) solidarity' (Heiman, 1996: 112-113). Harvey's critique takes a perspective from outside of the movement and imposes a direction which does not take account of its emergent trajectories. Writers on the environmental justice movement such as Heiman (1996), Pulido, (1996), Lake (1996) and Di Chiro (1996) have illustrated the

productiveness of a different tone of critical engagement. They have illustrated how engagement with a movement's direction can emerge through following its activity. This kind of approach which follows and responds to the tensions of different movement's activity has also been taken by Halfacree (2000), Maxey (2000) and Barry (1998).

The political engagement of the thesis is structured by such an injunction to follow activity rather than to form an intervention which is from outside of this activity. This necessitates a way of treating activity as generative rather than being only defined by pre-existing political ideas. This doesn't mean that activity is theorised as separate from political ideas, but rather it seeks to construct a more recursive relation between political ideas and activity. An 'injunction' to follow activity, and to consider political activity as generative, demands that research is conducted in relation to the directions and engagements of emergent political identities. There is an openness about this kind of strategy of engagement. It is not searching for a final way of conducting politics. Rather it seeks to engage with how social and political movements have connected environmentalism and inequality. These concerns about disrupting and dislocating divisions which have erased these connections or made them more difficult to imagine have also influenced the structure and the style of the thesis.

#### **1.4 Political Position and the Structure of the Thesis**

This account of the environmentalisms of the poor attempts to foreground the agency of subaltern groups in contesting unequal social and environmental relations. The thesis is structured to allow the contested histories and geographies of these subaltern engagements to come to the fore. It is structured in ways which disrupt the neat divisions which have structured ways of writing about social and political movements. To do this it develops three case studies, two contemporary and one historical. I developed a historical case-study to foreground the complex histories and geographies of subaltern engagements with environments. I felt it was important to explore the continuities between contemporary environmentalisms of the poor and the subaltern struggles of the past rather than to suggest a fundamental discontinuity. I chose two contemporary studies to demonstrate the diversity of contemporary environmentalisms of the poor and also because I wanted to weight the structure of the study towards an engagement with the political identities emerging through contemporary struggles.

There was an intellectual rationale behind the choice of case-studies. I sought to find case-studies which would threaten and unsettle existing theoretical positions adopted in relation to environmentalisms and social movements. This included unsettling the

theoretical concerns and engagements that I brought to the thesis. But perhaps more significantly, these case-studies were struggles and movements that I was passionate about. The engagements with the two contemporary case-studies emerged from my everyday political involvement. I engaged with a historical case-study partly out of frustration with the cultural nationalisms that have structured the ways that contemporary struggles have invoked histories of subaltern resistance. My strongly-held views and passions about the conduct of these movements have decisively shaped the way that I have written the thesis. I have tried to make these passions explicit and part of the writing and research process rather than excluding them from the conduct of the research. This approach draws on a number of attempts to make the political identities of the researcher and researched, co-constituted and negotiated through research practices.<sup>3</sup> Since these passions are intertwined with an ethical-political position that I have brought to and developed through the thesis I will make this position explicit.

My writing and research on environmentalisms of the poor emerged from an ethical-political standpoint which views struggles which have brought together issues of environment and inequality as significant and worth engaging with. This assessment of these struggles arises from an ethical-political perspective which sees unequal ways of constituting social and environmental relations as unjust and pernicious. Through the thesis I wanted to celebrate these struggles and foreground their agency. But I also wanted to engage with these struggles in a way which didn't romanticise their conduct or seek to ignore aspects of their struggles which I, albeit writing from a very specific and situated context, was uncomfortable with or saw as problematic.<sup>4</sup> This research, thus does not seek to produce an uncritical advocacy or celebration of these struggles. Rather, it is oriented towards producing ethical-political interventions in the conduct of these movements.

The grounds for these interventions emerges from the ethical-political implications of the Foucauldian insights that power relations cannot be eroded or made absent from political struggles and movements but are productive and need to be actively engaged with (Patton, 1989: 263-266). The ethical-political interventions made in the thesis engage with the way movements sought to handle this productive role of power. Thus one of the key ethical-political interventions that structures the thesis is an opposition to the idea that decentralised, small-scale and bounded communities are necessarily politically liberatory (for celebrations of such communities see Bookchin, 1971, Do or Die, 1999, Sale, 1993). For accounts which privilege the formation of such communities tend to evade the ways that unequal power relations and exclusionary politics can be re-inscribed in small, 'face-to-face' communities. In opposition to such political utopias this thesis seeks to produce an

imaginative geography of resistance where the connections between different struggles become viewed as central to the political identities of such struggles. The thesis has tried to foreground these connections through writing up the case-studies in relation to different themes rather than through viewing them as bounded objects of study.

In chapter 3 I introduce these movements in some detail, but elsewhere in the thesis I have related accounts of these struggles to different theoretical concerns. This strategy of narration is ordered around a desire to tell stories that disconcert often spontaneous assumptions about political identities and activity. It has sought to bring together different aspects of political activity in new and unexpected ways. It draws on the disruptive stories told by Whatmore and Thorne about wildlife. Whatmore and Thorne have creatively challenged existing ways of thinking about wildlife through 'juxtaposing two historically remote configurations of wildlife' (Whatmore and Thorne, 1998: 438). This strategy enabled them to 'disconcert the space-time co-ordinates of the wild'. Here I have applied a similar logic, juxtaposing different forms of political activity so as to disrupt some of the divisions which have limited contemporary political imaginaries. This narrative strategy aims to be productive. It seeks to disrupt the tendency to treat different social and political movements as fixed and ontologically separate.

The thesis develops a stress on the continuities of connections between environmental struggles and struggles against inequality in subaltern politics through a study of the political activity of the Whiteboys. The Whiteboys were a mid-eighteenth century Irish 'peasant' movement which contested the enclosure of common land. They were part of a major tradition of agrarian secret societies which were active in Ireland between the mid eighteenth century and the famine in the nineteenth century and had effects on later forms of Irish subaltern politics. The study centres on the first major phase of Whiteboy activity. This was located in the province of Munster in the early 1760s. This study draws on research into primary sources, but doesn't aim to give a comprehensive account of this phase of Whiteboy activity. Rather it seeks to explore their contestation of dominant environmental and social relations. The military and judicial repression of the Whiteboys and the way the movement was negotiated in official and élite politics are touched on but are not made central to this account.<sup>5</sup>

This study also engages with Linebaugh and Rediker's innovative account of the Whiteboys' relations to Atlantic routes of radical ideas and experience (Linebaugh and Rediker, 1991: 25-30). It develops an account of the Whiteboys' interrelations with the multi-ethnic political constituency that was active in the London Port Strikes of 1768. The thesis also develops in detail discussions of the social and material relations and struggles

of the mainly Irish coal heavers who were active in these strikes. This involves thinking against assumptions that the struggles of the past necessarily had less complex or interrelated spatialities than contemporary struggles. The thesis develops accounts of these interrelations *alongside the contemporary counter-globalisation struggles* that were brought together through the Inter-continental Caravan. Through doing this it seeks to examine the ongoing and contested co-constitution of spatiality and politics.

The Inter-Continental Caravan was an ambitious project which sought to bring together activists from Indian New Farmers' Movements with European green and social justice activists in May and June of 1999. The project located opposition to neo-liberal globalisation and biotechnology at the intersection of different routes and traditions of resistance. These alliances were productive. Significant tensions were generated as these routes of activity came together, partly due to the pressure exerted by versions of Indian nationalism on the solidarities produced through the project. But the project also began to negotiate and experiment with subjectivities and practices which might generate an internationalist opposition to neo-liberal globalisation. A stress on the generative character of activity and the ongoing experimentation and negotiation of political identities emerges through this study. These themes are also developed through the other contemporary case study developed in the thesis, the diverse political constituency mobilised by the Land is Ours around a 'wasteland' site in London.

In May 1996 the Land is Ours occupied a 12 acre derelict site in Wandsworth. The site was occupied as a demonstration site to explore how aspects of social justice and ecology might be interrelated in a contemporary urban context. Again this engagement was hesitant and incomplete. Tensions emerged through the action over how marginalised urban groups were integrated into the campaign. The assertive wasteland ecologies of the site were only partially engaged with through the occupation. But this intervention suggests that the subjectivities and agency of 'environmentalisms of the poor' can emerge through experimentation with different practices, rather than being subordinated to fixed blueprints. The study situates this struggle in the wider context of the UK anti-roads movement by drawing on earlier research I carried out at Pollok Free State in Glasgow. The theoretical approach adopted here seeks to be alive to the possibilities opened up through the combination of actions and practices in new or unexpected ways.

The theoretical framework for the study is set up in chapter 2. It develops ways of bringing to the fore the agency of subaltern groups in engaging with unequal social and environmental relations. It situates the thesis against attempts to eradicate antagonism from political ecologies and against a pervasive tendency to temporalise difference in political

subjectivities. It applies a relational construction of the political to environmentalisms of the poor. It animates this relational approach through adopting a focus on the generative character of political activity and through arguing that political activity can contest and reconstitute dominant spatial relations.

Chapter 3 develops accounts of the agency and character of different environmentalisms of the poor. It introduces the movements which form the empirical base of the thesis. It situates these movements as products of routes of activity and as *interventions in specific relational contexts*. The chapter also outlines and justifies the conduct of the research that the thesis is based on. It outlines an approach which I describe as ‘*entangled practices of research*’. These are research practices which engage with the political identities that emerge through the activity of ‘*environmentalisms of the poor*’.

Chapter 4 engages with questions of how environmentalisms of the poor construct agency. The chapter does this through rejecting bounded conceptualisations of political activity. Through drawing on empirical material from all three case studies the chapter locates political activity as part of cross cutting relations of power. It argues that doing this helps to tell stories about the distinctive ways ‘*environmentalisms of the poor*’ construct their agency and identities. The chapter argues that rejecting bounded versions of political activity can permit a focus on how place located identities can be constituted through positive relations and identifications with other struggles.

Chapter 5 takes on this discussion of how the activity of environmentalisms of the poor negotiate cross cutting relations of power. It thinks through the implications of Carl Schmitt’s insistence that conflict is central to the political for attempts to theorise space and politics as co-constitutive. The chapter argues that environmentalisms of the poor form ‘*maps of grievance*’ through the distinctive ways they relate to and make sense of cross-cutting relations of power. The chapter in turn demonstrates that the way these maps of grievance are formed and imagined have effects on the political identities formed through activity. It argues that maps of grievance are formed in relation to particular forms of combining and arranging humans and non humans.

Chapter 6 develops this focus on how particular forms of combining and arranging humans and non humans become mobilised and contested through the activity of environmentalisms of the poor. It draws on Law’s account of modes of ordering as ‘*patterning effects*’, ‘*forms of strategic arranging that are intentional but do not necessarily have a subject*’ (Law, 1994: 21, 110). It explores how the formation of collective political wills can involve *mobilising, contesting and reconstituting particular modes of ordering and spatial relations*. This develops the focus on the productiveness of political activity



that is central to the thesis. In contrast to the work of reflexive modernisation theorists this chapter engages with the collective passion constituted through political activity. The chapter explores how the modes of ordering adopted by environmentalisms of the poor can emerge through forms of collective experimentation.

Chapter 7 draws together the main engagements of the thesis. It restates the claim that there are significant histories and geographies of the way subaltern groups have engaged with unequal environmental and social relations. It then focuses on the tensions of the subaltern engagements being discussed and discusses the importance of thinking about how particular spatial imaginations of power effect the durability of equivalences. It applies these arguments to some of the emerging directions of counter-globalisation politics.

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed accounts of struggles around environmental justice/ racism in the US see Bullard, 1993, Di Chiro, 1996, and the special issue of *Antipode on Race, Waste and Class*, 28:2.

<sup>2</sup> Hence the stress on different 'roads' to socialism.

<sup>3</sup> For diverse examples of such approaches, see Maxey, 1999, Halfacree, 1999, Routledge, 1996. For an extraordinary powerful example of politically engaged research see McKeown's account of the political struggles of republican prisoner's in the H-Blocks of the Maze Prison. This account draws on his own direct involvement in these struggles (McKeown, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> For an example of the production of romanticised accounts of political struggles within geography see Routledge and Simons (1995). Linebaugh and Rediker's pioneering work on Atlantic radicalism also suffers from tendency to romanticise their resisting subjects. They produce a radicalised version of the Atlantic working class, through isolating key political activists from their involvement with Atlantic trading networks (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000). Their discussions of Olaudah Equiano, for example, do not mention that he was involved in trading slaves as well as being an ex-slave, and an anti-slave activist. For an account of Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* which engages with these ambiguities, see Kanzanjian, 2000. There are, of course, many accounts of resistance which seek to refuse the romanticisation of their subjects. See, for example, James's account of the Haitian slave revolution of 1791 (James, 1937: esp. 224–241).

<sup>5</sup> For the repression of this phase of Whiteboy activity, see Donnelly, 1978. For the impact of the Whiteboy movement on official politics, see Magennis, 2000: 54, 56, 166, 168, 176.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **The entangled construction of political identities: political ecology, antagonism and the constitutive role of spatiality**

#### **2.1 Introduction: the relational construction of political identities**

Chapter 1 introduced Laclau and Mouffe's argument that political identities should be understood as relationally constituted. This relational imagination opens up political possibilities since it:

permits us to redimension and do justice to workers' struggles [...] whose character is distorted when they are contrasted en bloc to the struggles of the 'new political subjects'. Once the conception of the working class as a 'universal class' is rejected, it becomes possible to recognise the plurality of the antagonisms which take place in the field of what is arbitrarily grouped under the label of 'workers' struggles', and the inestimable importance of the great majority of them for the deepening of the democratic process [...]

(Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 166-167).

Laclau and Mouffe here unsettle the divisions between the struggles of the 'new political subjects' and 'workers' struggles. Their account of the relational construction of political identities and the plurality of antagonisms allows them to transcend the tendency to treat these movements as sealed, 'unitary empirical objects' (Melucci, 1988, cited by Escobar and Alvarez, 1992: 7). Through examining the continuities between these diverse political movements and traditions, Laclau and Mouffe suggest ways of invigorating contemporary political imaginaries. For rather than reinforcing these divisions by giving them fixed ontological status, their approach enables the imagination and discussion of forms of alliance between different political actors, practices and traditions.

Envisioning the political in this way is of central importance for imagining and theorising 'environmentalisms of the poor.' A focus on how antagonisms are articulated in multiple ways makes it possible to examine how movements have articulated antagonisms around poverty and environmentalism together. This breaks with a tendency to view different antagonisms and engagements as the specific property of particular traditions or political movements. It signals the possibility of an open and imaginative approach to the challenges posed by the antagonisms associated with the 'new social movements'. This is a direct contrast to writers like Harvey who have argued that through

adopting a multiplicity of antagonisms 'new social movements' were an agent of the disintegration of left politics (Harvey, 1989: 354). He suggests that the 'eclecticism' and 'pluralism' can be avoided through subordinating such antagonisms to the primary node of class through 'uncovering the raw class content of a wide array of anti-capitalist struggles' (Harvey, 1996: 431-2). Laclau and Mouffe's focus on the multiple nature of antagonisms emphasises the impossibility and undesirability of their closure around one primary node such as class.

Their stress on the way political activity mixes up different forms of engagement involves transcending a pervasive tendency in writing about political identities and movements. This is the tendency to force political subjectivities into sealed and often temporalised categories. There are diverse examples of such approaches. Eric Hobsbawm's influential conceptualisation of 'the pre-political', set up peasant movements and early modern artisans as 'spontaneous', 'primitive rebels' lacking the coherent forms of structure and organisation, which would be bestowed on them by the formation of trade unions and political parties and their associated intellectuals and leaderships (Hobsbawm, 1959, see also Hobsbawm and Rudé, 1973). Habermas defined 'new social movements' as 'post-materialist' struggles about the 'grammar of forms of life' situating them as a decisive break with the 'materialist' struggles of labour politics (Habermas, 1980: 30-33). Giddens developed this division in his account of a Third Way politics which seeks to construct broad consensus around key contemporary political issues. Žižek has also written in similar terms of the emergence of a contemporary epoch characterised by being 'post-political' (Žižek, 1999).

This temporalisation of difference in political subjectivities has three specific and related consequences. Firstly, through seeing different political subjectivities as belonging to different epochs it downplays the co-existence of difference in political subjectivities.<sup>1</sup> This has implications for the possibility of understanding antagonisms, defined here as the hostile articulation of difference. Co-existence of difference is a condition of possibility of antagonism, and of the articulation of antagonisms in multiple ways. Modes of analysis which are based around the temporalisation of difference tend to erase the way movements construct, and are constituted in relation to, multiple antagonisms. This tends to obscure the agency of social and political movements. For social and political movements have constructed their agency through the specific ways they have articulated *relations of power and difference as antagonisms*.

Secondly, this temporalisation of difference produces a reductive view of the spatial relations of political movements. The pre-political identities discussed by Hobsbawm are

constituted by a strictly 'local' version of resistance, where actors are viewed as unable to engage or contest wider connections that stretch beyond the local. Giddens' account of Third Way politics is based around a form of citizenship which is piloted through contemporary transformations of space/time rather than having any agency in constituting or contesting these relations (Giddens, 1998). The reductive spatial imaginations formed through temporalising imaginations of the political tend to obscure the agency of subaltern groups in struggling over and attempting to constitute spatial relations as part of the political acts and subjectivities they engage in.

Thirdly, these temporalised imaginations view political subjectivities as based around static, fixed identities and values that are already formed before political activity. A focus on political activity as constitutive of political identities can stress the constant mixing up of elements that are seen as belonging to specific temporalised political subjectivities such as 'material' or 'post-material'. Examining the practices of the political can unsettle claims that a politics around 'environments' is necessarily something new. For there are histories and geographies of how political practices have been crafted in entangled ways with webs of spatio-temporal relations and with non humans. This account draws on Latour (1994), Hinchliffe (2000a) and Whatmore (1999) to adopt an approach to the political as ongoing, entangled activity, co-produced with non humans.

This rejection of temporalising imaginations, then, enables a stress on the ineradicability of antagonism, the constitutive role of spatiality and the co-production of political identities with non humans. It is an approach which has implications for how political interventions are imagined. This version of political change problematises the importance given to radical moments where 'the world is turned upside down'. It opens a terrain where political questions are not reducible to specifically human questions, but bear on issues of how to handle and negotiate aspects of co-existence. This move problematises the way Laclau and Mouffe's radical democratic project adopts a conception of the political as a purified human social achievement. For as Latour argues the key problem for contemporary left politics is 'no longer to 'make the revolution'', but to explore co-existence between totally heterogeneous forms of people, times, cultures, epochs and entities' (Latour, 1999a: 15). This suggests that antagonisms can be constructed in relation to different ways of imagining and practising co-existence. It allows different ways of envisioning or performing such co-existence to become what is at stake in political activity.

This chapter approaches 'environmentalisms of the poor' through adopting a relational construction of the political. It argues that 'environmentalisms of the poor' have crafted

their political activity through negotiating the unequal power relations that exert pressure and set limits on particular forms of co-existence. It provides the theoretical grounding for an examination of the history and geography of the agency of marginalised groups in engaging with unequally constituted 'environments'. The chapter outlines a way of engaging with the character of this agency and situates it as limited and precarious. I adopt a definition of resistance which makes explicit the tensions that are constituted through the activity of resistance to and engagement with unequally constituted social and environmental relations, rather than defining resistance primarily by an absence of power. The chapter thus outlines a way of engaging with the 'environmentalisms of the poor' in opposition to attempts to temporalise political subjectivities. It outlines a way of examining the agency crafted by marginalised groups through their engagements with unequal social and environmental relations which is developed and elaborated through the rest of the thesis.

## **2.2 Political Ecology, Antagonism and Spatiality**

Anthony Giddens has argued that the challenges posed by political ecology are part of 'a whole range of [other] problems and possibilities' that 'have come to the fore that are not within the reach of the left/right schema' (Giddens, 1998: 44, see also Giddens 1994b: 198-228). For Giddens a left/ right schema that was based around an adversarial definition of politics has given way to issues that can be tackled through the mobilisation of a broad consensus. He rejects the 'win- win' proposals of ecological modernisation which suggest that there can be a comfortable reconciliation between 'environmental protection and economic development' (Giddens, 1998: 58). But his account downplays the way environmental problems and politics can be constituted by, or in relation to, unequal relations of power. He argues:

Bottom up alliances can be built, and can provide a basis for radical policies. Tackling ecological problems, for instance, certainly often demands a radical outlook, but that radicalism can in principle command widespread consensus. From responding to globalization to family policy the same applies.

(Giddens, 1998: 45).

Giddens attempts to constitute the environment as a domain which can transcend forms of adversarial politics through his assumption that these questions can command widespread

consensus. His stress on the formation of a widespread consensus to solve ecological problems sets out a case that where as 'old' political issues could be dealt with through forms of adversarial negotiation, 'new' political challenges can be dealt with in ways that transcend the need to resolve conflict. Through arguing that ecological problems can be dealt with through mobilising a broad consensus, however, he eradicates the constitutive role of power from these relations. To do this is to eradicate from the field of 'the political' what Mouffe and Schmitt have termed 'the ever present possibility of antagonism' (Mouffe, 1993, 1999, 2000, Schmitt, 1963). That is the possibility that differences will be articulated in adversarial or even hostile ways. This section outlines how this logic can be applied to political ecology and how this involves a focus on the constitutive role of power and spatiality.

Giddens cements his account of the environment as an 'issue' around which a radical consensus can easily be formed through a reductive account of political subject positions. He delineates the differences between 'new' and 'old' political subjects in relation to three key transformations.

The overall aim of third way politics should be to help citizens pilot their way through the major revolutions of our time: *globalisation, transformations in personal life* and our *relationship to nature*.

(Giddens, 1998: 64, emphasis in the original).

In constructing this division between new and old political subjects he draws heavily on the designation between 'materialist' and 'post materialist' political values. This division has been widely used to make sense of the distinctiveness of the new social movements, but is a way of temporalising difference in political subjectivities. It is a division which has strong echoes, for example, of Ulrich Beck's aphorism that whereas 'poverty is hierarchic; smog is democratic' (Beck, 1992: 36). This is an aphorism which is elaborated on and refined in his conceptualisation of 'reflexive modernisation', but only in ambiguous ways.

Such an imagination evades the possibility that environmental problems might interrelate with other forms of social division. It refuses to engage with the way that differential abilities to shape and engage with environments can be a node through which the experience of divisions like 'race', gender or class are lived. Thus Habermas's account of the material and post-material asserts that the concerns of the 'new social movements'

are qualitatively different from those of labour movements. He argues the 'new social movements' are 'post material' because they were sparked 'not by problems of distribution, but by concern for the grammar of forms of life' (Habermas, 1980: 33). Inglehart's own account, drawn on uncritically by Giddens, is more openly reductive. He argues that a 'silent revolution' in values in Western society has emerged, as a result of 'two basic facts' with 'far-reaching implications'. These 'facts' are that 'people are safe and they have enough to eat' (Inglehart, 1977: 22). The result is that 'the evidence points to two trends; a shift, as suggested, from scarcity values to post materialist values...and a changing distribution of values, which fits neither class lines nor the right/ left dichotomy' (Giddens, 1998: 21-22). Giddens suggests this 'detraditionalisation of society' has produced a set of post-material values and orientations within politics (Giddens, 1998: 36). Since these values don't 'fit' into the traditional antagonisms it is argued that antagonism *per se* is unimportant and should be rendered absent from new forms of politics.

This reductive view of the political partly emerges from the temporalisation of difference in political subjectivities. These broad, temporalising gestures flatten diversity and erode the multiple forms of antagonism that have structured diverse political engagements. Inglehart's account, for example, 'offers no evidence [...] for the assumption that economic orientations predominated during the early years of industrialization or that non materialism appears only late in the story' (Calhoun, 1995: 179). This move closes down the possibility that there might be histories of political activity that have been non-materialist or combined the 'material' and 'post-material'. Inglehart's thesis is also based around a reductive conceptualisation of the political. It views 'political values' as pre-existing social and political practices and as determined by material concerns. The material/ post-material division also maps on to a complex and far from innocent genealogy of the word 'materialism'. The word 'materialism' has been used to denigrate the lives of marginalised and 'lower' social groups. It has been mobilised as part of projects to construct them as 'low' others to the loftier forms of spirituality and politics engaged in by dominant groups (Sewell, 1995: 178, Stallybrass and White, 1986: 145, Williams, 1983: 198). The material/ post-material division through its location in these sets of counterpositions closes down and purifies our understanding of movements in unhelpful ways.

An active mix of 'material' concerns with concerns about the quality of the 'grammar of life' turns up in places which are extremely disruptive to the temporalised imaginations of Giddens and Inglehart. It turns up in eighteenth century petitions by London coal

heavers who prefixed a demand for greater regulation of their trade with a statement about the 'dirty and slavish' character of their labour. The articulation of their grievances was structured by a concern with the deteriorating status of their trade as well as their low wages (Coal heavers, 1764, see also chapter 4 below). It would take a particularly reductive account to reduce this to a base materialism. The opposition of Whiteboys to enclosure in eighteenth century Ireland can be seen as a purely 'materialist' struggle only if aspects of pride and independence constructed through access to and usages of land are eradicated from an assessment of the Whiteboy movement (see chapter 6 below). Similarly, many contemporary forms of environmentalism cannot be seen as simply post-material. The occupation of Gargoyle Wharf by land rights campaigners in 1996, for example, articulated concern over urban environments with anger over the prevalence of homelessness and the lack of affordable housing provision. Diverse political subjectivities have constructed antagonisms through practices which mix up and recombine forms of activity which political theorists like to treat as separately material or post-material. These subaltern engagements with 'environments' cannot then usefully be reduced to a narrow belly materialism.

Here I have rejected an attempt to theorise 'environmentalisms of the poor' in relation to the materialist/ post-materialist division (see Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1998: 35, for an example of such an approach). To adequately engage with the political identities and activity of 'environmentalisms of the poor' it is necessary to examine how aspects of values that are designated as 'materialist' or 'post-materialist' can be performed together through the same political activities and identities. Critical spatial thinking with its emphasis on the co-existence of multiplicity has resources for engaging with how practices can combine and mix up values that are seen as 'material' or 'post material'. For the divisions between different political subjectivities are partly achieved through separating both historical and contemporary political actors from active engagement with spatially stretched relations of power. The politics of the Third Way or Radical Centre constitutes the political as an arena of consensus through accepting as 'natural' and uncontestable the contemporary space-time transformations of neo-liberal globalisation. Giddens' attempt to eradicate antagonisms and adversary from the domain of political ecology is in part constituted through isolating citizens from engagements with spatially constructed power relations.

For Giddens the role of third way politics is to negotiate citizens' relationships to wider transformations rather than to foster collective agency in shaping or contesting such changes. He eradicates antagonism from political ecology through setting up



'globalisation, changes in family structure and the transformations of our relationship to nature' as transformations that citizens should be 'piloted through'. This language is instructive. For Giddens outlines a passive construction of citizenship and political agency. Rather than hailing citizens as part of the changing space-time configurations of 'globalisation' with some agency to negotiate, shape and engage with such transformations, his account presents these changes as *faits accomplis* which citizens need to be 'piloted through'. This closes down the possibility that different groups might construct political agency through their distinctive negotiations of such transformations. Further he assumes that different citizens experience such transformations, and are constituted by them, in fundamentally similar ways.

This version of the political also structures the emergent political practices and imaginations of some environmental politics. High profile reports such as the Brundtland Commission have circulated an 'avowedly apolitical' approach to sustainable development structured by a 'rhetoric of partnership and stakeholder democracy' and a desire to 'achieve the global consensus amongst both citizens and governments' (McNaghten and Urry, 1998: 215). The tensions of this search for consensus are particularly apparent in the way that participation in environmental politics is imagined and produced. There are important similarities between the forms of participation that have emerged through the activity of some environmental movements and agendas and the forms of radical centrist politics proposed by Giddens and Blair, though there is not a direct, unproblematic link. Both advocate forms of consensus which are constituted through externalising conflict. This is particularly prevalent where these forms of participation centre themselves around quite sealed notions of the neighbourhood or community.

A *New Economics Foundation* paper which outlines the central role of 'neighbourhoods in an agenda for community economic renewal', for example, constitutes the neighbourhood in opposition to globalisation. It constructs globalisation as a threat to the UK's status as a 'historically, liberal society' (Mayo et al., 1997: 2). The paper argues that 'that local residents do not consist of a single homogeneous grouping' but subordinates this difference to a common good through a goal of articulating 'shared views on key issues' (Mayo et al., 1997: 13). This form of politics tends to produce a telluric version of 'local people'. These 'local people' tend to be constituted in similar ways to processes like globalisation rather than through negotiating and contributing to these connections in diverse ways (see Mayo et al., 1997, New Economics Foundation, 1998). These forms and discourses of participation can have ambiguities which make

them less benign than they can first appear. (These ambiguities are developed in a detailed account of one participatory exercise in chapter 5.) Some quite problematic politics can emerge through the way these discourses oppose the 'local' to 'globalisation'.

This opposition between the local and global can limit political possibilities. It downplays the possibility that local forms of politics might be formed in relation to spatialised chains of equivalences with others beyond their specific localities. These others might be struggling against similar processes, including processes which might have been constituted through some of the less than liberal interconnections produced through the UK's past. This bounded imagination of local politics can be challenged through interrogating how different groups are located in cross-cutting relations of power (Moore, 1997, 1998). For as Massey (1993: 61) argues 'different social groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to the[se] flows and interconnections' that are being constituted and re-constituted by globalisation. This is what it means to think of a 'power-geometry' of globalisation (see Massey, 1999: 9-23). Thinking of a power-geometry of globalisation involves interrogating the ways that different flows reconstituting places can be contested and hence become constructed as antagonisms. This is a condition for thinking about the multiplicity of conflict in the political.

For Giddens, and some environmentalisms, constitutes a consensual environmental politics by excluding questions of the power-geometries shaping contemporary societies from the 'terrain of contestation'. This position is predicated on a version of the political as a process for the formation of a rational consensus. It envisions the political as a process of negotiation between already constituted interests. This is a version of the political where power relations are excluded. Mouffe argues, however, that 'we should not conceptualise power as an external relation taking place between two pre-constituted identities, but rather as constituting the identities themselves' (Mouffe, 2000: 21). The implications of this position are that instead of 'trying to erase the traces of power and exclusion, democratic politics requires us to bring them to the fore, to make them visible so that they can enter the terrain of contestation' (Mouffe, 2000: 33-34). This entails a vision of democracy as 'an unending process' rather than a search for a final, rational consensus, for the 'desire to reach a final destination can only lead to the elimination of the political and to the destruction of democracy' (ibid.).

*Social and political movements have emerged, and there are histories and geographies of such movements, that have constructed political agency through dragging issues about the unequal impacts of interconnections and flows on places and environments into the*

'terrain of political contestation' (Kipfer, Hartman and Marino, 1996: 13-14). The Inter-Continental Caravan, for example, constructed alliances between West European green movements and Indian farmers' movements through contesting their common exposure to the threads of power of multi-nationals like Monsanto. Their activity refused a passive definition of citizenship. They refused to be just 'piloted' through forms of globalisation. These alliances were constituted through trying to make contemporary space-time transformations part of the terrain of political contestation, rather than an 'outside' of political debate.<sup>2</sup> Locating environmental politics at the intersection of these different cross-cutting relations of power can make explicit the power relations and conflicts involved in constructing definitions of what counts as 'environmental' in politics.

One of the implications of this is that it becomes clear there is not a single version of the environment to be consensual about. Rather there are multiple power relations involved in how we define the very terms 'nature' and 'environment' and how they become mobilised through political activity. The contestation of these terms of debate illustrates the impossibility of reaching a final consensus about how environments should be related to. Challenging these limits opens up to critical scrutiny the simplistic notion of a singular transformation of relations with 'nature' through which Giddens and Beck characterise contemporary societies. It suggests the importance of a problematisation of the use of terms like 'nature' in the discourses of mainstream environmentalism.<sup>3</sup> Di Chico has argued that in mainstream US environmentalism 'what counts as environment is limited to issues such as wildland preservation and endangered species protection' (Di Chico, 1996: 300).

Political agency can be constructed through contesting what is defined as environment, rather than there being a single, consensual, agreement on what counts as the environment in environmental politics. The definition of what is being struggled over/being shaped does not stay static as these relations are contested. Rather than there existing an uncontested 'nature' which a broad political consensus can be formed around, as Giddens suggests, different conceptions of what constitutes 'nature' or the 'environment' and how this 'nature' should be related to are constitutive of different political identities. This involves reconfiguring how political identities are envisioned and theorised.

The work of what Latour describes as the 'modern constitution' has produced domains like the political through techniques of purification which separate the 'natural' and the 'social' (Latour, 1993, Whatmore, 1999). This approach structures the version of the political adopted by Mouffe, for example, who limits the political to the 'organisation of

human co-existence' (Mouffe, 1998: 16). Latour's stress on the way that particular practices mix up humans and non humans in ongoing and contested ways emphasises that political identities are not formed through relation to an 'external' or 'outside' nature. Rather political identities are part of the ongoing co-production of the world and identities through relations with multiple forms of actants. This opens up the possibility of a politics which negotiates aspects of human–non human co-existence.

Practices of 'engaged agency' are not constructed by abstract 'minds in vats' engaging with a neatly delineated 'outside nature' (Thrift, 1996: 35, Latour, 1993: 6). Neeson, for example, argues and demonstrates that eighteenth century Northamptonshire commoners not only used common waste as a formative part of their livelihoods, but also constructed their identities through these usages (Neeson, 1993: 158-184). Rather than there being a neat delineation of the social and natural here, these identities are produced through the ways they combine humans and non humans. Antagonisms can be constructed through the contestation of different views, practices, ways of combining and setting up relations between humans and non humans. Political identities can thus be constituted through struggles around such usages rather than just pre-existing them. Because concepts like 'nature' are bound up with, and produced through, the different ways social groups construct their relations both with other humans and with non humans they can never be innocent, rational, consensual categories.<sup>4</sup> It is because there are multiple ways of constructing human-non human relations, and the possibility that these can be conceived in irreconcilable ways, that there can exist antagonisms over political ecology. This articulation of the relations constituting collectives of human and non-humans in antagonistic ways is one of the very conditions of possibility for a political ecology. It is in relation to these contested processes that I want to define and situate 'environmentalisms of the poor'.

This section has begun to outline theoretical tools which can help illuminate the 'ever present possibility of antagonism' in political ecologies. It has argued that doing this necessitates a stress on the contemporaneity of difference in political subjectivities. This can emerge through rejecting the tendency to exclude the power geometries of contemporary neo-liberal globalisation from debates on political ecology. A focus on how spatially constructed power relations can be made part of a 'terrain of contestation' suggests that spatial thinking can help examine how the political is the site of a plurality of antagonisms. This disrupts attempts to render the environment as a singular entity which consensual relations can be constructed around. The next section outlines an entangled and generative account of political activity which can transcend some of the

problems inherent in attempts to temporalise political subjectivities.

### 2.3 The entangled and generative character of political activity

W.E.H. Lecky argued that 'the real causes of the Whiteboy outbreak' in Ireland in the early 1760s were 'to be found on the surface'.

Extreme poverty, extreme ignorance and extreme lawlessness made the people of a great part of the South of Ireland wholly indifferent to politics; but their condition was such that the slightest aggravation made it intolerable and it had become so miserable that they were ready to resort to any violence to improve it [...]

(Lecky, 1892: 37).

Lecky's analysis strictly delineates the activity of the Whiteboys from what he defines as political. He presents the Whiteboy movement as composed of spasmodic actors lacking any form of political identity and determined only by 'surface causes'. R.M. Madden, an early historian of the United Irishmen<sup>5</sup>, constructed a similar sense of the Whiteboys as located outside of the political. He viewed them as low Southern 'others' defining them against the 'organised' forms of politics that characterised the United Irishmen. He argued there 'was no connection whatever between the republican spirit of the north and the insurrectionary spirit of the south' as the Whiteboys contended not for any 'specific form of government' but for 'a more substantial and intelligible object food' (Madden, 1842: 25).

These attempts to locate the Whiteboys firmly outside of politics are part of a long standing analytical and political sensibility that reduces the poor's participation in politics and engagements with environments to the spasmodic outcome of a narrow 'belly' materialism. This reductionism is a particularly ferocious form of condescension. It obscures the vibrant agency of marginalised groups in engaging with what Moore describes as the 'cross cutting matrixes of power' which shape the production of environments (Moore, 1997: 93). These are ways of thinking which have important limiting effects on contemporary theoretical and political imaginaries. They close down the possibilities of equivalence between different forms of movement, through positing fixed divisions between diverse social struggles, such as those in the North and South.

Lecky and Madden were both nineteenth century historians, but the tropes of explanation that they used have powerful legacies. These tropes were only partially

dislocated in the work of major Marxist historians working in the twentieth century. Eric Hobsbawm's notion of the 'pre-political' continued the tendency to locate the activity of marginalised groups as outside of what counts as political. Hobsbawm defined pre-political actors as 'those who have not yet found, or only begun to find, a specific language in which to express their aspirations about the world' (Hobsbawm, 1959: 2). He stresses how the acts of pre-political peasants and labourers, such as the rioters in the Captain Swing disturbances, were 'spontaneous' and 'unorganised' (Hobsbawm and Rudé, 1973: xxv). Describing the modes of action of the Swing riots as 'spontaneous' and 'unorganised' implicitly contrasts *en bloc* the Swing movement with the forms of organisation, those of the classic labour movements, that Hobsbawm accepts as properly 'political'. Hobsbawm dismisses too quickly the forms of action of the Swing riots as spontaneous and unorganised. Through doing this he reproduces some of the forms of epistemic violence to the poor perpetrated by writers such as Madden and Lecky. This use of the term spontaneous presents Swing rioters as actors without histories of organisation and without legitimising notions which framed and gave meaning to their actions.

This imagination of resistance is constituted by a very particular imagination of space and time. Although the acts are seen as spontaneous they are also seen as archaic. Hobsbawm and Rudé describe Swing disturbances as 'improvised, archaic, spontaneous movements of resistance' (Hobsbawm and Rudé, 1973: xxv). These acts become dissolved into a seamless and unchanging construction of 'traditional' forms of protest. This closes down the possibility of seeing labourers as part of an active history drawing on and shaping specific forms of mobilisation and resistance. Viewing Swing rioters' political activity as the spontaneous expressions of archaic forms of resistance denies them agency in shaping the forms of activity with which they engaged. The designation of these actors as pre-political is also constituted by a particular version of the geography of such resistance. These English labourers are cut off from engaging with interconnections. Attacks by Swing rioters on Irish migrant labourers are given scant treatment in Hobsbawm and Rudé's account (Hobsbawm and Rudé, 1973: xxi, 61, 72, 182, for a critique see Wells, 1996: 236, and also Barber, 1982). This section seeks to outline an account of political activity which views it as constituted through engagement with spatially stretched power relations in contrast to attempts to theorise political activity as bounded. This begins to refigure political activity as entangled and generative.

Hobsbawm's concept of the pre-political is constituted by a spatial imagination which sees actors as being restricted to the local and thus unable to constitute themselves as properly political subjects. This suturing of the 'pre-political' with the 'local' is one of the

most powerful legacies of Hobsbawm's notion of the pre-political. Specific forms of protest, especially those mobilising around the 'moral economy' and 'customary rights' are still almost automatically designated as essentially 'local' and 'conservative' (for applications of this theoretical position to the Whiteboys, see Eagleton, 1995: 83-86, Garvin, 1982). Davies's recent study of women's political activity in the seventeenth century, for example, argues fenland riots, which were often led by women, were 'local', defensive and 'conservative' (Davies, 1998: 14). This tendency to elide the pre-political and the local drives and shapes what Thompson (1968: 12) described as 'the enormous condescension of posterity'. Imagining the politics of customary rights in such a way renders invisible the forms of organisation that they did engage in. It cuts them off from shaping any wider connections, or having agency in shaping forms of regulation like common rights which were formed through dynamic ways of regulating relations with non humans.

This way of approaching the space-time contexts of action has decisively shaped how the repertoires of activity associated with politics that invoked or mobilised forms of customary right have been theorised. Thompson argued that food riots were mobilised to contest power relations 'within the community' (Thompson, 1991: 188). Tilly has recently emphasised the 'parochial, particular and bifurcated' character of eighteenth century repertoires of contention (Tilly, 1995: 33, see also Bohstedt, 2000). He suggests these repertoires were parochial because 'most often the interests and action involved were confined to a single community' and particular 'because forms of contention varied significantly from one place, actor or situation to another' (Tilly, *ibid.*). Theorising repertoires of contention as local and parochial is more problematic than it might at first seem. It produces a temporalising move which suggests that modes of political activity in different epochs are engaged in action at different spatial scales. Figure 2.1 which draws on the work of Tilly shows how temporalising imaginations produce a sense of political activity in particular epochs as engaging primarily at one specific spatial scale.

**Figure 2.1: Three types of repertoire with sample actions, after Tilly (reworked from Cohen and Rai, 2000: 15).**

1650-1850	1850-1980	1980-2000+
<i>Parochial and patronized</i>	<i>National and autonomous</i>	<i>Transnational and</i>
Food riots	Strikes	<i>solidaristic</i>
Destruction of toll gates	Electoral rallies	Band Aid concerts
Machine sabotage	Public meetings	Telethons
Expulsions of tax officials	Insurrections	Earth/Women’s summits
		International consumer boycotts

Viewing the repertoires of pre-1850 political activity as parochial and bounded closes down examination of their relation to spatially constructed power relations and routes of subaltern activity. Bounded imaginations of spatiality that are often the product of a pervasive cultural nationalism have structured many oppositional ways of writing history, geography and the political. Political theorists, historians, geographers, all have trapped contemporary and historical social and political movements in bounded spatialities such as the locality or nation. Gilroy has emphasised in an eloquent critique of the work of E.P.Thompson and Raymond Williams that it is not adequate to view forms of radicalism as being ‘produced spontaneously from their own internal and intrinsic dynamics’. For even ‘the most heroic, subaltern English nationalisms’ were ‘generated in a complex pattern of antagonistic relationships with the supra-national and imperial world’ (Gilroy, 1993: 11, see also Gilroy, 1992).

There are ways of theorising political activity which dispense with the ontological centrality and certainty of national boundaries and ethnic divisions. C.L.R. James’s account of the dynamic interconnections between the Black Jacobins of the Haitian revolution and the French Revolution is an innovative and inspirational version of such an imaginative geography of resistance (James, 1939, esp. 197-8). This way of thinking is productive. It ‘force[s] us to introduce the question of subaltern agency into the question of modernity’ (Bhabha, 1994: 224). Situating forms of resistance at the intersections of routes of subaltern activity can dramatise how subaltern agency has reconstituted spatial relations rather than being confined within dominant spatial relations. This involves



seeing spatiality as constitutive of and reconstituted through political activity. This breaks with a tendency to view movements as merely reacting to transformations in power-geometries that stretch beyond the nation-state, rather than theorising them as constituting or contesting such power-geometries.

An imaginative geography of resistance which stresses the co-operation between different ethnic groups forced together by eighteenth century Atlantic trade networks emerges through the pioneering work of the historians Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. They treat events such as the Boston Massacre in 1776 when a 'motley rabble of saucy boys, negroes, and molattoes, Irish Teagues and outlandish Jack Tarrs' rioted on the Boston docks as emblematic of the political activity and agency of an 'Atlantic Working Class' (Linebaugh and Rediker, 1991: 21-22, the quotation is from John Adams, Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000). These heterogeneous and multi-ethnic political constituencies were formed through overlaps and contacts between diverse groups of sailors, slaves and labourers. They were part of the 'circulation of working-class experience' which linked 'urban mobs, slave revolts, shipboard mutinies, agrarian risings, strikes and prison riots' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Linebaugh and Rediker, 1991: 35). Linebaugh and Rediker's work emphasises the continuities of forms of political activity which have mobilised heterogeneous political constituencies formed through constitutive relations with other flows of activity. Heterogeneity of participants has often been seen only as a defining feature of the 'new social movements' (see Calhoun, 1995, Hetherington, 1998: 2).

These heterogeneous political constituencies constructed agency through engaging with the unequal geographies of power of Atlantic wide forms of capitalist exchange. Since these Atlantic trade networks were in formation and unfinished, possibilities existed for these heterogeneous constituencies to engage with how these relations were shaped and lived (see Massey, 1999: 37, for the argument that space is in process and thus unfinished). Adopting such a politicised geographical imagination outlines some of the vibrant political agency constructed in relation to the power-geometries of what is now termed 'globalisation'. A focus on the always contested nature of these spatial formations can help re-invigorate political imaginaries in the face of claims that such power-geometries are uncontestable. For, as Rose and Gregson, have emphasised activity does not take place within bounded spaces, but is active in renegotiating and reconstituting spatial relations (Rose and Gregson, 2000). This runs counter to a consensus emerging in geography around the use of the term performance which is predicated on a version of the subject as already constituted and on 'the sense of performances occupying particular

pregiven kinds of spaces' (Rose and Gregson, 2000: 438).

Linebaugh and Rediker appropriate the Myth of the Many Headed Hydra to emphasise the power of labourers' diverse Atlantic experiences, activity and interconnections.<sup>6</sup> This myth was used by different ruling élites from the beginning of English colonial expansion in the early seventeenth century 'to describe the difficulty of imposing order on increasingly global systems of labour' (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 17). There are, however, tensions in the way that Linebaugh and Rediker deploy this myth. They tend to theorise political activity as autonomous rather than constituted through what Moore describes as engagements with 'cross-cutting matrixes of power' (Moore, 1997: 93). An emphasis on the autonomy of the activity of these actors (see Linebaugh, 1992: 3-4, Rediker, 1988: 291, Linebaugh and Rediker, 1991: 35) means they tend to ignore the constitutive effects on political identities of differences such as ethnicity or religion. They treat different moments of resistance as expressions of an underlying body of Atlantic working class experience. This tension is particularly apparent in their discussion of the Gordon Riots, the largest insurrection in London during the eighteenth century.

Linebaugh and Rediker demonstrate that the liberation of hundreds of prisoners from Newgate Gaol as part of the Gordon Riots in 1780 was the act of London's multi-ethnic poor (Linebaugh and Rediker, 1991, Linebaugh, 1992). Their account emphasises the heterogeneity of the participants in the riots which is absent from existing accounts of the event (see Rudé, 1952, 268-292, Rogers, 1998: 152-175, and also Porter, 1996: 153, 155, 158 and Colley, 1992: 22-3, 332). The crowd that liberated Newgate included Afro American activists and former slaves (Linebaugh, 1992: 348). The liberated prisoners were similarly diverse. They were 'English, Italian, German, Jewish, Irish and Afro-American' (ibid.: 336). But Linebaugh and Rediker separate this event from the violent anti-Catholicism which shaped the riots, barely mentioning this context (Linebaugh, 1992: 333-334, Linebaugh and Rediker, 1991: 31). This isolates the liberation of Newgate from the anti-Catholic dynamics of the Gordon Riots. Through this they fail to position differences other than class as constitutive of political identities. This also evades the way that the riots intersected with histories of anti-Irish prejudice within London's popular politics.<sup>7</sup>

The account of the African-British grocer Ignatius Sancho who witnessed part of the riots stresses how the protestantism and patriotism of the event excluded at least part of the heterogeneous 'Atlantic working class'.

'This- this- is liberty!- genuine British liberty!- This instant about two thousand liberty

boys are swearing and swaggering by with large sticks thus armed in hopes of meeting with the Irish chairmen and labourers'

(Sancho, [1782] 1998: 218).

That this 'British liberty' was constituted against groups like the Catholic- Irish suggests that tensions within the diverse constituencies Linebaugh and Rediker discuss could become articulated as political antagonisms. The overlaps and exchanges that constituted the political culture of the Atlantic working class need to be seen as generative of possibilities both of co-operation and of division and exclusion. The Gordon Riots were an event where co-operation and division were being constituted and reconstituted through the same event.<sup>8</sup> Viewing the riots as the action of bigoted anti- catholics or of 'sober workmen' (Rudé, 1952: 283) or as the insurrectionary achievement of a heterogeneous Atlantic working class is inadequate. It is necessary to understand how these diverse and overlapping political identities could co-exist within the same set of events.

Positioning the spaces assaulted through the riots as constitutive of the identities that emerged through these actions is one way of engaging with this multiplicity. Identities constituted by less explicitly 'British' forms of liberty emerged through assaults on targets less strictly associated with Catholicism. Rudé argues that 'attacks on the houses of certain non-Catholic magistrates and justices [...] mark[ed] no departure from the original character of the riots' (Rudé, 1952: 284). But events like the liberation of Newgate suggest that a riot initially defined as violently anti-Catholic could be transformed by some actors to engage in the liberation of prisoners of diverse nationalities and religion. Political identities and alliances can thus be reconfigured through activity. They can exceed their existing logics and frameworks (Hinchliffe, 2000b: 591). In part this happens through the way targets or sites of grievance change through activity. Examining the dynamics of these spatial practices can help engage with the implications of the generative character of activity for the formation of political equivalences and alliances. Here I understand spatial practices not simply as the 'projection onto a (spatial) field of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice' (Lefebvre, 1991: 8). Rather I use spatial practices to suggest the ways that identities are recursively constituted through the formation and negotiation of particular spatial relations.

Laclau and Mouffe have argued that 'before the democratic revolution'<sup>9</sup> social struggles 'always took place in the context of given and relatively stable identities'. In

these contexts 'the frontiers of the antagonism were plainly visible and did not require to be constructed' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 171). The activity of crowds in events like the Gordon riots however suggests that the conduct of groups was productive of political actions which negotiated and constructed antagonisms in specific ways. This was often through non-intentional and joint forms of activity. Shotter has argued that joint action constructs what he describes as 'practical-moral knowledges' (Shotter, 1993: 107). Geography matters in the production of such practical knowledges. Alliances and equivalences were formed in relation to sites that were hated by many of London's multi-ethnic poor such as Newgate. These alliances were not necessarily produced only through purified cognitive and linguistic practices. For alliances and equivalences can be reshaped through the conduct of activity and through particular spatial practices of resistance. Equivalences between and within struggles can be constructed in ongoing and contested ways through various activities, rather than only through prior identification with particular political ideals.

Mouffe's definitions of equivalences, however, do not engage with the textures and conduct of political activity (Mouffe, 1988: 99, Mouffe 1993: 19). It is through these kinds of definition that Laclau and Mouffe's political theory separates the political from 'the mundane business of *living*' (Whatmore, 1997: 40, emphasis in original). Here I have tried to develop an account of the political which takes into account the importance of activity. I have deployed a definition of equivalences which views them as practices of solidarity and connection which are defined by doing more than bringing fixed interests together. They are practices which can reshape and unsettle the identities which are mobilised through joint actions. Examining the productiveness of political activity can also help foreground how historically and geographically constituted social relations can set limits and exert pressures on the possibilities of articulation between different formations.

These histories and geographies impact on the ways in which antagonisms are articulated. Examining the effects of multiple histories and geographies is important for rejecting a voluntaristic account of political activity. Laclau and Mouffe argue antagonisms are not predetermined by essential characteristics which fix them to left or right, but are floating signifiers 'which can be articulated to other elements in a social formation' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 168). This is an important insight, but it is also important to consider how histories and geographies of action can make the articulation of particular antagonisms in certain ways much more likely. Thus the solidarities formed through the conduct of the Inter-Continental Caravan were partly closed down by the

nationalist idioms of dissent deployed by the Indian farmers' movements like the KRRS which were partly a legacy of Gandhianism. This made it more difficult for a genuinely internationalist opposition to neo-liberal globalisation to emerge. In the Gordon Riots the 'mob' was constituted in relation to histories of anti-Catholicism and anti-Irish prejudice. Histories of co-operation between ex slaves and Irish and English labourers may have shaped actions like the liberation of Newgate, see chapters 4 and 6 below.

This focus on the ongoing, formation and reconstitution of political identities necessitates a rejection of the figure of the fully formed autonomous subaltern political subject. This way of constructing political subjects is a recurrent feature of writing on subaltern and resistance politics. Guha's account of the 'autonomous subaltern subject', a key theoretical underpinning of the Subaltern Studies project, for example, was defined against Hobsbawm's notion of the pre-political. Yet this formulation closes down the agency of subaltern actors in similar ways to Hobsbawm's approach (Guha, 1982, 1983a: 6, Moore, 1997, 1998). Rather than using a critique of Hobsbawm to examine how subjects have made their political activity as part of incomplete, ongoing practices and relations, Guha counters with an account of the fully formed subaltern political subject (see also O'Hanlon, 1988). He argues that there was '*nothing* in the militant movements of [colonial India's] rural masses that was not *political*' (Guha, 1983a: 6 emphasis added). This closes down the possibility for examining the fissures, breaks and continuities in social and political movements. It makes it equally difficult to examine how difference can co-exist in political subjectivities. This adoption of the fully formed autonomous political subject has three consequences.

Firstly, it assumes that the formation of subjectivities through complete identification of life and politics is both possible and desirable. Bobbio's critique of direct democracy argues that the formation of a complete political subject tends to be a totalitarian construct. For the 'Rousseauistic individual called upon to participate in the political process from morning to night [...] is on closer inspection merely another aspect, and a no less menacing one, of the total state' (Bobbio, 1987: 44). For it envisions 'the reduction of all human interests to the interests of the polis, the integral politicisation of humanity, the total transformation of the private sphere into the public sphere, and so on' (Bobbio, *ibid.*). This closure of identity through complete identification with the political makes an 'affirmation of porous identity' impossible. Mouffe uses this term to argue that 'only hybridity creates us as separate entities' and to affirm 'the nomadic character of every identity' (Mouffe, 1994: 111).

Secondly, an autonomous conception of the political subject tends to close down the

agency of marginalised political actors in similar ways to those inherent in the pre-political approach. The agency and distinctiveness produced through articulating antagonisms in specific ways is often downplayed in accounts which stress the autonomous character of actors. Guha's account of the co-existence of class and ethnic solidarities in communist-led agrarian uprisings among sharecroppers of Bengal in 1946-7 falls back on accounts of 'spontaneity' to explain the strength of the mobilisation<sup>10</sup> (Guha, 1983a: 170). His focus on the autonomous subaltern subject here erases the dynamics through which class and ethnicity are articulated together. If political subjectivities are seen as fully formed before engaging in political action it becomes impossible to imagine how such activity might be generative of new forms of identities and relations. In contrast it becomes important to examine how activity articulates and combines identities in different ways. The way activity brings together and combines different routes of activity is productive of potentially new political identities. This allows political activity to be reconceptualised as generative.

Thirdly, viewing political subjects as autonomous isolates them from webs of spatial and temporal relations. This closes down actor's agency in contributing to or contesting spatially constructed power relations. It also views resistance politics as a purified achievement of particular human actors rather than as the fragile and always limited mobilisation of specific sets of relations which combine and mobilise specific 'collectives of humans and non humans' (Latour, 1998: 231-2). There are resources for constructing the political as more than a purified human achievement. Hinchliffe argues for the importance of 'understanding actions as co-productions' between sets of humans and non-humans 'wherein there lie no pure thoughts or deep seated blue prints' (Hinchliffe, 2000a: 232). Such an account of action involves thinking against the grain of much social science. It also involves thinking against the grain of accounts of resistance which have replaced counter-insurgent stories about spasmodic, deluded, unthinking mobs with stories of completely formed, purified and rational political subjects.

Section 2.2 introduced the argument that antagonisms are formed in relation to the organisation of collectives of human and non-human rather than being defined only in relation to aspects of human co-existence. Equivalences and antagonisms are formed through practices where there is no ontological split between the human and non-human, social and natural. This focus on activity can bring to the fore how the conduct of the political is not a purified human achievement. *Connections and relations between humans and non-humans are constructed through the very constitution of political activity, rather than political activity just legislating about what should happen in the completely separate*

sphere of the 'natural'. For as Latour argues every activity 'implies the principle of symmetry between humans and non-humans, or, at the least, offers a contradictory mythology that disputes the unique position of humans' (Latour, 1994: 54). The final section of this chapter develops an account of how political activity might be thought of not as a purified human achievement, but as an ongoing, 'entangled' process, co-produced by collectives of humans and non-humans.

## **2.4 Entangled ontologies of political ecology**

Existing accounts of 'environmentalisms of the poor' have tended to view the politics of marginalised groups as constituted in relation to an outside nature, which exists separately from human activity<sup>11</sup> (Hardiman, 1994, Martinez-Alier and Guha, 1997, Escobar, 1996). In these accounts marginalised groups are constructed as having unified relations with this outside nature. Hardiman, for example, in his account of power relations among Dang forest dwellers, in South Gujarat, India in the nineteenth century, argues against positions which see forest dwellers as having 'survived for millenia in harmony with their environment and without oppressing others' (Hardiman, 1994: 90). But he re-introduces a sense of the homogenised marginalised group through counterposing the practices of forest dwellers to the practices of forestry officials. Hardiman argues that a view of the forest as property 'was wholly alien to the people of the Dangs; for them the forests were a way of life and spiritual home, not mere timber with a capital value' (Hardiman, 1998: 117).

In these accounts environmental poverty, unequal access to resources like the forest inhabited by the Dangs, becomes one further aspect of the marginalisation of lower class social groups. This view is important because these forms of poverty have been grossly neglected. But this sense of marginalised groups having unified and already constituted relations with an outside nature can be unhelpful in accounting for the productive and contested agency of these marginalised groups. Escobar, for example, argues that an 'environmentalism of the poor' becomes enacted when 'the poor try to defend their natural environments from material and cultural reconversion by the market' (Escobar, 1997: 56). Here the relationships of the poor with environments are viewed as fixed and completed before their engagement in political activity. This tends to locate political agency outside of these marginalised groups. Escobar's definition of the 'environmentalism of the poor' locates agency in the 'outside' force of the market. The agency of marginalised groups becomes constituted negatively in opposition to such outside forces.

This absence of agency stems partially from the ontologies of society and nature that such work adopts. Here, I use ontology to suggest a set of assumptions about how we engage with and attempt to know and theorise the world. The work of Hardiman, Escobar and Martinez-Alier and Guha adopts a fixed ontology of 'society' and 'nature' where groups have unified relations with an environment constructed as outside of society. This closes down the possibility of the actors of marginalised groups constituting and negotiating embodied relations and practices with non-humans in ongoing, contested and unfinished ways.

Situating the relations of marginalised groups with non-humans as embodied, diversely constituted relations makes the divisions between humans and non-humans much harder to draw. This allows the agency involved in forming and reproducing these relations to become distributed more widely, both in terms of human and non-human actants. Such political activity begins to become a work of co-production of humans and non-humans. It situates both humans and non-humans as having distinctive trajectories. This enables 'environmentalisms of the poor' to have histories and geographies and to be constituted through the ongoing contestation of power relations. This offers alternatives to the tendency to locate 'environmentalisms of the poor' as emerging at that juncture where the poor's 'natural environment' is captured by the market. These divisions between the social and the natural have also been powerfully articulated in much radical environmentalist thought and activity. The imaginaries of radical environmentalisms have often been structured by a pervasive and rigid gaze to the past that produces a telluric version of a singular 'ecological self' located in the past (for a more detailed critique see Darier, 1999a).

Such 'edenic narratives' temporalise ecological relations (see Hinchliffe, 1999: 140-7). Through pointing to past harmonic relations where humans were part of, or 'close to nature', they close down the possibility of imagining new forms of co-existence between humans and non-humans. They have also uncritically inherited constructions of wilderness, and of a singular nature<sup>12</sup>, which were the product of particular histories and power relations. Traditional environmental arguments have commonly constructed 'society and nature' and the 'urban versus wild/ natural' as 'hostile dichotomies' (Di Chiro, 1996: 301). This denies the always contested sense of relations between humans and non-humans and 'casts any use as *ab-* use' (Cronon, 1996b: 84). These versions of a singular nature have separated humans from nature 'while constructing nature as in need of human control' (Di Chiro, *ibid.*). Further they have 'constructed some people, such as native Indians or the enslaved Africans brought to the new world [...] as part of a wild,



untamed nature that had to be exploited and controlled' (Di Chiro, 1996: 301-2).

In developing their politics around such distinctions environmentalisms have allowed what Latour has described as 'the modern constitution' to pervasively structure their political imaginaries. For Latour 'the modern divide between the natural world and the social world' has the status of a constitution because it elevates these divisions to 'fundamental articles of faith' (Latour, 1993: 13). This ontological division between society and nature has produced a version of the political subject as specifically human. Political identities according to this constitution are essentialised from entanglements with other humans and non-humans (see Latour 1998: 6). This version of political identity rests on the exclusion of the possibility that politics could bear on aspects of co-existence with non-humans.

In contrast to this position Latour seeks to make the negotiation of forms of human/non human co-existence a central part of political ecology. He envisions political ecology as 'bearing on the complicated forms of association between beings' (Latour, 1998: 229). His argument takes us forward from an account of politics which is envisioned as the negotiation between isolated human subjects, a position which is refigured in many accounts. Darier's attempt to transcend the idea of a permanent 'ecological self', for example, through using insights drawn from the work on ethics of Michel Foucault develops a potentially suggestive focus on 'the active constitution of subjectivities' (Darier, 1999a: 27). But he allows the ethics of this subject to be limited to the relation between 'the self reflecting individual and their conduct *vis-a-vis* the 'environment' and *vis-a-vis* oneself' (Darier, 1999b: 227). Latour's account has resources for seeing political identities as formed not in isolation but through the ongoing activity of constructing equivalences in relation to both humans and non-humans. This situates political activity as the entangled co-production of humans and non-humans.

Haraway's description of the politics of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) captures wonderfully the multiple articulations through which political activity and political constituencies are formed. Haraway describes ACT UP as a 'collective built from many articulations among unlike kinds of actors' (Haraway, 1992: 323). The skeins of different actors mobilised by ACT UP include 'activists, biomedical machines, government bureaucracies, gay and lesbian worlds, communities of color, scientific conferences, experimental organisms [...] condoms and dental dams, [...] innovative sexual practices, dancers, media technologies [...] scientists, lovers, lawyers, and more'. These actors, Haraway asserts, 'are not all equal' (Haraway, *ibid.*).

This assertion raises important questions about how inequality is to be thought if one

adopts a relational ontology of the political. For I think it is important to think beyond a statement that asserts that these different actors are combined in unequal ways. For the different arrangements of these actors, or the orderings of these actors to use Law's terminology, are not static, but are continually formed. Particular struggles can construct agency and identities through contesting the terms on which they are integrated into these collectives. These struggles often construct as antagonisms specific aspects of the orderings of these collectives. Thus London coal heavers in the 1750s, for example, were part of diverse, unequal social and material relations. But their political activity contested the specific practices through which middlemen in their trade monopolised the shovels they used and attempts to prevent coal heavers modifying or repairing their own shovels.<sup>13</sup>

This suggests how the coal heavers crafted struggles against inequality which were not mobilised only around static questions of distribution. They were struggles against unequal social and material relations and were interventions in cross-cutting relations of power negotiated between unlike actors. The coal heavers' very identities were constituted in relation to these material practices and how they were ordered. This focus on the processes through which inequality is reproduced resonates with Iris Marion Young's insistence that 'a focus on distributions is insufficient if it ignores or obscures the broader structural and institutional context within which decisions are made' (Lake, 1996: 165, see also Young, 1990). But this way of approaching activity demands a rejection of Young's narrowly social ontology. Young argues that where as social relations need to be thought of in procedural terms, relationships with materials and natural resources are fixed and static and that a justice relating to these factors can be thought of in simple distributional terms (Young, 1990: 33).

In contrast this thesis adopts a modest ontology which views activity as an entangled co-production of humans and non-humans. This ontology is adopted to open up engagements with the environmentalisms of the poor. These engagements are defined here as the way marginalised groups contest the unequal arrangement of collectives of humans and non-humans. The agency produced through these engagements is not reducible to a base materialism, but mixes up aspects of political values and activity usually designated as material or post-material. There are four key aspects of such an ontology. It is modest, and it views activity as continually formed, relational and subject to contestation.

This thesis adopts a partial and limited ontology to disrupt a totalising political imagination which seeks to speak of 'all' the aspects of human and non-human collective life. Such a strategy need not mean an 'infinite regress' into solipsism, via endless

personal references to positionality (Hayles, 1995: 61). Rather as Haraway argues partiality is not sought 'for its own sake, but for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible' (Haraway, 1991: 196). Adopting a limited, partial ontology is necessary for making explicit the ongoing and contested connections that constitute political activity. It is through playing and acknowledging an albeit modest role within these ongoing activities that this research has sought to investigate and engage with the political identities shaped through diverse '*environmentalisms of the poor*'. This demands making explicit the necessarily partial and situated account of the contemporary case studies I have discussed. There are also implications for the study of the Whiteboys, and the approach used to interrogate sources which are discussed in chapter 3.

This position also draws on recent writing on the geographies of practices have also suggested the importance of adopting a modest and open ontology of engagement. Thrift argues there has been a major change in the way the social sciences and humanities are being thought and practised (Thrift, 1997: 126). This is the rise of 'non-representational theory or the theory of practices' which attempts to provide a 'non-intentionalist account of the world'. The concern of this work is 'not primarily the discovery of how the world "really" is, its representation.' Rather it is 'active in making a sketch, a continuity of engagement that allows us to know how things are because of what we did to bring them about' (Radley, cited by Thrift 1997: 126). This work also emphasises that activity is a co-production of humans and non-humans.

Further, recent writing on the geographies of practices emphasises the way that social and spatial relations are constantly in process and becoming. Relations are not ossified or stable, but are the site of 'misfires and stoppages, unintended outcomes, unprecedented transferences, and jagged changes' (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000: 418). This suggests that these relations need to be theorised as continually formed. But these practices cannot be viewed in isolation or as evolving organically from their own transformations. Practices are continually formed in relation to specific relational contexts. For Ingold 'the forms people build, whether in the imagination or on the ground, arise within the current of their involved activity, in the specific relational contexts of their practical engagements with their surroundings' (Ingold, 1995: 76). This relational context of action is 'not an impassive backdrop to situated human activity' but 'a necessary constitutive element of interaction [...] something active, differentially extensive and able to problematise and work on the bounds of subjectivity' (Thrift, 1996: 3). Here spatial relations become seen as constitutive of and re-constituted through political activity.

This relational ontology is necessary to adequately address the ways that antagonisms are crafted through political activity. As I argued in the Section 2.2 the 'ever present possibility of antagonism' is not something that threatens political ecology; it is one of the very 'conditions of possibility' of its existence. Antagonisms are understood here as the hostile articulation of difference in the work of production and re-production of collectives of humans and non-humans. Non-humans can have agency in engaging with these antagonisms, for example through refusing the roles prescribed to them by social relations (Hinchliffe, 2001).

Adopting a relational ontology thus helps situate antagonisms as constitutive of the political. As Massey argues 'recognising space as the sphere of the meeting up, or not, of [...] trajectories' enables examination of how these trajectories 'co-exist, affect each other, fight' (Massey, 1999: 37). The keyword in this account of space is fight. It positions spatiality and antagonism as potentially co-constitutive. Positioning particular activities as part of distinctive trajectories negotiating cross cutting matrixes of power can help re-position antagonism as an 'ever present possibility' of political ecology. For as the discussion of Haraway's work emphasised it is specific, partial and limited aspects of the production and reproduction of collectives of humans and non-humans that become articulated as antagonisms, though these specific instances have contexts and are related to wider equivalences of struggle and networks of power. A modest ontology can be more useful in developing accounts of how antagonisms are produced than a totalising language of the collective. Developing accounts of the multiple relations that constitute different collectives is also helpful in introducing the agency of subaltern groups into accounts of the production of collectives of humans and non humans. This has implications for the way agency is to be understood and theorised in this account.

Thrift describes agency as 'the production of action and of what counts as action (and of actors and of what counts as actors)' (Thrift, 1996: 2). He argues there are two key aspects of agency. The first he suggests as 'mainly concerned with the 'wellsprings' of active participation in new beginnings and how these have varied historically and geographically'. The second element is a concern with a new 'classification of things' through 'which the bounds between subject and object become less easily drawn.' This involves recognising networks as 'collectivities of all manner of objects which all contribute in their way to the achievement (and attribution) of agency' (Thrift, 1996: 26). This produces a situated and materially heterogeneous account of agency. Here I am concerned also to see agency as constructed through the ongoing negotiation of cross cutting relations of power. It is through these ongoing negotiations of power that subaltern

groups construct agency through reconstituting spatial relations as part of their political activity. Their political identities are also partly constituted and reconstituted through such activity.

This agency is never outside of power relations. The agency of marginalised groups can be productive of power relations as well as contesting them. Hence there are tensions in the movements being investigated as part of this thesis between the way they both contest and produce power geometries. One of the key engagements of this study is not only to recover a focus on the history and geography of the agency of marginalised groups in contesting the formation of collectives of humans/ non humans in unequally constituted ways. It is also to examine the character of this contested and productive agency. The character of this agency can emerge through a modest and entangled ontology of engagement. This sees the stutters and fissures of activity as limited and productive. It reconfigures 'environmentalisms of the poor' as ongoing engagements, which might be productive of more equal relations between unlike actors. These engagements are productive of power relations. But these power relations can be ongoing and contested and can generate new experiments between unlike actors.

## **2.5 Conclusions**

This chapter has engaged with the tendency to temporalise difference in political subjectivities. Sequential imaginations of political subjectivities have been shown to have had a pervasive influence on the study of political/ social movements and the forms of political imagination developed through such work. This has been illustrated through Hobsbawm's concept of the pre-political, Giddens' and Habermas's focus on the division between material and post material values, and radical environmentalism's tendency to structure itself around edenic narratives which locate ecological selves in an imagined past. I have used a focus on spatial thinking to argue for the importance of a stress on the co-existence of difference in political subjectivities as an alternative to the violence done to actors by these temporalising imaginations. This can allow a more generous interpretation of the activity of 'environmentalisms of the poor' to emerge. It can begin to stress the importance of engaging with the generative character of activity, through exploring how political identities can be reconfigured and reconstituted through engagements. I have argued that this reconstitution of political identities is performed through intervening in and reconstituting spatial and temporal relations. The agency of these groups can emerge through such a view as entangled in sets of wider power relations and in sets of relations between unlike actors. This stress on the co-existence of difference

also allows a focus on antagonism as constitutive of the political, rather than something that needs to be excluded for the political to function properly.

This position opens up possibilities. Rather than placing fixed ontological divisions between forms of political activity, it can suggest the productiveness of connections between political activity of diverse traditions. This is important for envisioning the diverse possibilities of engagement that might coalesce in 'environmentalisms of the poor'. It also opens up the possibility of political identities being formed in relation to non humans. This emphasises how environmentalisms of the poor can be productive of diverse engagements between unlike actors. Some of these collective relations can be articulated in very antagonistic ways but some of them can mobilise positive relations and equivalences between unlike actors.

The chapter has argued for the adoption of a modest and limited ontology which seeks to open up possibilities for engaging with environmentalisms of the poor. This partial ontology has implications for how research is conducted. It necessitates envisioning research not as outside of the conduct and formation of political activities and identities. Rather it suggests that forms of engagement can be constructed through interrelating with and being part of the action of different environmentalisms of the poor. Chapter 3 introduces the case studies that form the empirical work of this thesis. It introduces how these diverse examples help to engage with arguments about the agency of marginalised groups in negotiating environmentalisms of the poor. It also introduces and justifies the strategy of entangled research practices adopted through the conduct of the research.

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<sup>1</sup>Temporalising imaginations can also place disconcerting aspects of the political in the past, rather than seeing them as constitutive of the present conjuncture. Michael Ignatieff has argued, for example, that 'pre-political ethnic nationalism has delivered the ordinary people of the Balkans straight back to the pre-political state of nature where, as Hobbes predicted, life is nasty, brutish and short' (Ignatieff, cited by Morley, 1996: 354).

<sup>2</sup> These movements also challenge the work of writers like McNaghten and Urry (1998: 97-101, 267-70) who in their work on contested natures see globalisation as important but only so far as it allows greater production and circulation of images of environmental protest. They don't develop an account of how neo-liberal globalisation is orchestrated by particular institutions or how environmental politics is constituted in relation to these institutions. For a discussion of neo-liberal institutions see Pryke, 1999: 236-244.

<sup>3</sup> There are histories of marginalised groups actively contesting the terms and practices associated with modern definitions of nature. The poet John Clare contested the way Linnaeus's system of classification, and the practices of naturalists inspired by such a system, eroded a sense of the poetics of non-humans. His poetic imaginary was constituted in opposition to both the 'gaze' produced by the romantic poets, and the naturalists and botanists who inspired by Linnaeus seemed 'to have no taste for [...] poetical feeling they merely make collections of dry specimens classing them after Linnæus [Linnaeus] into tribes and families' (Clare, 1983 [1824-6]:38-9). For a beautiful example of Clare's alternative to this way of writing nature see his poem 'To a Fallen Elm' (Clare, 1986: 84-86).

<sup>4</sup> As Raymond Williams has argued 'the idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history' (Williams, 1980: 67).

<sup>5</sup> The United Irishmen were the revolutionary and non sectarian political organisation which inspired by the

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French Revolution mobilised the 1798 rebellion, see Whelan 1996, Madden, 1842.

<sup>6</sup> On the history of this myth see also Hill, 1974: 181-204.

<sup>7</sup> On the histories of anti-Irish prejudice in eighteenth century London, notably significant anti-Irish riots in 1736 see Rudé, 1952: 201-221 and George, 1925: 124.

<sup>8</sup> This anti-Catholicism was defined in terms of the circulations of Atlantic politics. Lord Gordon argued that 'Catholic relief bills' had been devised for 'the diabolical purpose of arming the Papists against the Protestant Colonies in America' (cited by Erdman, 1977: 8). De Castro has argued that an important ingredient of the June Riots was 'the unfortunate management of the war against the American Revolution' (Erdman, 1977: 7). William Blake, a participant in the liberation of Newgate, in his prophecy *America* envisages the circulation of revolutionary ferment eastwards from America: 'the King of England looking westward trembles' (Blake, 1977: 211). Blake's 'account of what happened when George [III] held council and blew the loud war trumpet is that the conflict finally reached a revolutionary crisis not in America, but right in his own city-in the riots of 1780, which melted the bolts and hinges of Blake's soul' (Erdman, 1977: 54-55). Blake writes in allusion to the Gordon Riots 'then the pestilence began in streaks/ of red/ Across the limbs of Albion's Guardian, the spotted/ Plague smote Bristol's/ And the Leprosy London's Spirit sickening all their bands' (Blake, 1977: 219).

<sup>9</sup> Laclau and Mouffe position the French revolution as 'the key moment in the beginnings of the democratic revolution', citing approvingly Francois Furet's argument that the French Revolution 'is not a transition, it is an origin' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 155).

<sup>10</sup> There 'was more to this than class consciousness alone; otherwise it would not have erupted with such spontaneity. This apparent spontaneity was nothing but a measure of the displacement of class solidarity by ethnic solidarity' (Guha, 1983: 170).

<sup>11</sup> There are notable exceptions to the tendency to view social relations with 'environments' as unified, see for example Ingold, 1996.

<sup>12</sup> See Williams (1980: 70) for a discussion of some of the dynamics that produced this version of a 'singular and essential nature'.

<sup>13</sup> This argument is developed and demonstrated in chapter 4 below.

## Chapter 3:

### Routes of Activity, Environmentalisms of the Poor and Entangled Research Practices

#### 3.1 Introduction

John Wesley riding into Cork in June 1762 gleaned what he modestly described as ‘an exact account of the late commotions’ that had convulsed the south of Ireland. Though possibly not the ‘plain, naked fact’ he claimed, Wesley’s account gives an introduction to the forms of protest and organisation of the Whiteboys:

About the beginning of December last, a few men met by night near Nenagh, in the county of Limerick, and threw down the fences of some commons, which had been lately inclosed. [...] others met in the county of Tipperary, of Waterford and of Cork: as no one offered to suppress or hinder them they increased in number continuously and called themselves Whiteboys, wearing white cockades and linen frocks. In February there were five or six parties of them, two or three hundred men in each who moved up and down chiefly in the night [...] they levelled a few fences, dug up some grounds and hamstringed some cattle; [...] They compelled everyone they met to take an oath “to be true to Queen Sive” (whatever that meant) and the Whiteboys; not to reveal their secrets, and to join them when called upon. It was supposed eight or ten thousand were now actually risen, many of them well armed, and that a far greater number were ready to rise whenever they should be called upon. Those who refused to swear, they threatened to bury alive [...] At length [...] a body of troops, chiefly light horse were sent against them, many were apprehended and committed to gaol, the rest of them disappeared.

(John Wesley, [Journal of June 14th 1762 ] 1906: 98).

Wesley gives a powerful sense of the dramatic power of the Whiteboy movement: the carnivalesque forms of dress; the audacity of their performance of threats; the way their action targeted newly enclosed land, digging up such land and hamstringing the grazier’s cattle which was used to stock it, and their use of oaths. His account also illustrates the illegibility of the Whiteboys’ actions to authority. His confusion about the Whiteboys is manifest. He is uncertain about who Queen Sive might be. He gives vastly fluctuating numbers of those involved in Whiteboy activity, and evokes a shadowy sense that ‘a far greater number were ready to rise’ while many insurgents ‘had just disappeared’.

The ghosts of struggles against enclosure were summoned at Wandsworth on the



Thames waterfront in May, 1996. Land rights activists fighting the new urban 'enclosures' and the assault on squatting and popular protest posed by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 occupied twelve acres of derelict wasteland. This event also celebrated the histories of struggles against the expropriation of land. If this invocation of history was structured by a low level cultural nationalism then the emerging trajectories of the direct action movement shaped a more internationalist direction in May of 1999. Anti-genetics campaigners stood on the steps of the Nuffield Foundation in Bedford Square with activists from Indian farmers' unions. This action was part of the Inter-Continental Caravan, an alliance of the Indian new farmers' movements with European green and social justice activists. Here, the alliance was mobilised to protest against a Nuffield Foundation report which had been released that day and had advocated the development of genetically modified organisms. The farmers contested the way that the Nuffield Foundation had mobilised 'third world hunger', despite an absence of non-Western views in the expert process that had formed the report.

These different instances of protest and action are part of the case-studies that form the empirical base of this thesis. Chapter 2 argued that a tendency to temporalise difference in political subjectivities has closed down imaginations about social movements. This chapter discusses in detail the activity of three diverse movements which have constructed their political agency through contesting unequal social and environmental relations. In this chapter, I have set out three separate sections which begin to detail the three different movements that are central to this thesis. These sections introduce the routes, techniques and forms of action that these movements shaped or drew on. They also outline aspects of the conduct of the research into these movements. These sections set out a detailed context for each of these movements, so that the reader has a sense of the context before different aspects of their activity are developed in later chapters. Developing the relational contexts of these actions from the outset is also a way of refusing to produce voluntaristic accounts of political activity.

In the remainder of the thesis the structure is more fluid. Different themes and engagements are drawn out to organise the empirical material. This method challenges the fixed ontological distinctions which have tended to temporalise difference in political subjectivities. I have written about the movements in relation to different themes through the conviction that this can produce something more creative and generative than a neatly ordered comparative structure. This method approaches something approximating what the Situationists referred to as *detournement*, a key tactic 'in which objects, images, or words were ripped out of their original contexts and then juxtaposed, carefully and

deliberately, not randomly, to create new meanings and effects' (Pinder, 1996: 419; see also Debord and Wolman, 1989: 8-13). This strategy of narration is ordered around a desire to tell stories that disconcert often spontaneous assumptions about political identities and activity. It engages with the detailed primary research which has been conducted for all three of the case-studies. The accounts do not pretend to be exhaustive, or the final word in the study of these movements. Rather they attempt to open up an engagement with the way 'environmentalisms of the poor' are thought which can transcend the limits of studying one movement in isolation. They are part of an ongoing engagement with attempts to imaginatively interrelate the politics of 'environmentalism' and 'social justice'. This has implications for the way research practice has been envisioned in this thesis.

The final section of this chapter explores and justifies the research methodology adopted through the thesis. It develops the implications of the 'entangled ontology of engagement' set out in chapter 2 for the research practices adopted through the thesis. The research practices adopted here do not claim to be outside of the conduct of the forms of activity that are being investigated. Rather, I have adopted what I term 'entangled practices of research'. These research practices are constituted through engaging with the activity and political identities that are generated and produced through the conduct of the political, rather than seeking to stand outside of this conduct. The chapter thus begins to outline the engagements and agency of different 'environmentalisms of the poor'. It also explores and justifies the approach taken to studying these forms of activity through the thesis.

### **3.2 The Whiteboy Movements: 'a major part of the subversive experience of the mobile Irish...'<sup>1</sup>**

A letter from 'a gentleman' in Youghall to his son in London noted that the Whiteboys':

first rise was in October last and they have ever since been increasing. They, then and all along pretended that their assembling was to do justice to the poor, by restoring the ancient commons and redressing other grievances for which they always assembled in the night, with their shirts over their cloaths which caused them to be called Whiteboys

(Gentleman's Magazine, April 1762: 182)

The acts of the Whiteboys were not random, but were sanctioned by particular notions of redress and justice. This account emphasises that their action was legitimised by aims to do 'justice to the poor' through restoring commons and 'redressing other grievances'. This action appropriated dominant languages of customary right or moral economy. Here I draw on Thompson's definition of the moral economy as 'a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices in marketing, milling, baking etc' which could frame the grievances of actions such as English food riots in the eighteenth century. This consensus was grounded upon 'a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations' (Thompson, 1991: 188). Legitimising notions associated with the moral economy were also powerfully invoked in Ireland in the eighteenth century by various movements and crowd actions, suggesting important commonalities and exchanges between subaltern politics in Ireland and England in the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

In early-mid eighteenth century Ireland the 'custodians' of the moral economy were an Underground Gentry who played 'a pivotal brokerage role [...] in the articulation of political and popular culture' (Whelan, 1996: 1). This group of Catholic gentry and middlemen circumvented the anti-Catholic Penal Laws, reproducing their power and legitimacy through patronising forms of popular culture. By the 1760s the solidarity they had produced among Catholics 'was fracturing under the insistent pressure of economic change, widening class differentiation and increased hostilities' (Whelan, 1996: 53). This differentiation was produced through spatial practices like the enclosure of common land. Enclosure was not only practised by protestant gentry and middlemen such as Thomas Hackett of Fethard or Silver Oliver, the MP for Kilmallock.<sup>3</sup> John Butler 'son of Thomas Butler of Kilcash, a colonel in the Jacobite army and a leading Catholic' enclosed land on his Kilcash estate in County Tipperary in the mid 1750s.<sup>4</sup>

The increasing class differentiation co-produced through unequal access to land was one of the most important contexts of Whiteboy activity (Kenny, 1998: 19; O'Sullivan, 1989: 239). The Whiteboy movement was not undifferentiated, but it was largely an 'insurrection of [...] cottagers'.<sup>5</sup> Cottiers and labourers worked for middlemen and landlords often not being paid in cash but in access to conacre, 'tiny patches of land rented for the time necessary to plant and sow a crop of potatoes' (Kenny, 1998: 19). A correspondent of the Catholic historian John Curry noted in 1762 that 'the disorders of the poor in Munster' proceeded from enclosures that 'excluded those poor' from these spaces. These enclosures proceeded from a legal and economic context which encouraged pasturage rather than tillage and which led 'papists [to] worry papists', the poorer sort being excluded 'to make room for flocks and herds, which are easily converted into ready

money and find a ready market'.<sup>6</sup>

Enclosure exacerbated already existing inequalities. After land was enclosed on the Butler estate in Kilcash, County Tipperary in the mid 1750s, only the four most substantial of the existing twenty three tenants remained.<sup>7</sup> These patterns intersected with other unequal spatial relations. A Munster gentleman argued in 1741 that poorer cottiers were being 'forced to take little farms of exorbitant rates in the mountains - often at 2nd or 3rd hand' (Pubicola, 1741a: 1-2). The enclosed spaces were sites of intersections of spatially stretched power relations which were integrating Munster into an Atlantic economy through the export of dairy products such as butter.<sup>8</sup> In 1759 the English Cattle Acts, which had effectively ended Ireland's export trade in provisions with England, were repealed, making use of land for grazing increasingly profitable.<sup>9</sup> These acts which were repealed due to a combination of geo-political factors and the impact of pandemics of cattle 'plague' in England and on mainland Europe, were part of a context which led graziers to consolidate their often already significant holdings.<sup>10</sup> Arthur Young observed in the mid 1770s that in a number of counties in Ireland 'the greatest graziers and cow keepers' were to be found, 'some who rent and occupy from £3,000 to £10,000 a year' (Young, 1892 vol. 2: 30). John Curry remarked in 1766 that there are 'some which have a thousand acres under black cattle' (Curry, 1766: 6).

This export trade centred on Cork, 'one of the major ports of the entire Atlantic economy in this period' (Cullen, 1972: 55-6, 85). The Whiteboys' action in the north east of County Cork reflected in part 'the response of small-holding tillage families to displacement as a commercial grazing economy lapped up around these former subsistence zones' (Smyth, 1993: 663). These processes of commercialisation were uneven and differentiated (Dickson, 1993: 381). They generated and distributed materials in new and less equal ways. Justice Willes found the poor of Cork in 1760 'very angry' at a 'trade lately found out' by Cork butchers of salting and shipping the 'Hearts and skirts... in bulk for Scotland'<sup>11</sup> (Willes, [1760] 1990: 49). Willes implies that the poor of Cork had previously had rights to have these materials at low cost. As a dairying economy intensified in Munster the role of milk products in labourers' diets became progressively diminished (Cullen, 1981: 149; see also Young, 1892: 341, 369, 456-7).

The Whiteboys have been presented as an 'essentially conservative' movement which merely defended the already existing relations of the moral economy against these increasing forms of inequality and commercialisation (Bartlett, 1987: 193; Bric, 1985: 151; Donnelly, 1978; Eagleton, 1995: 83-86; Whelan, 1996: 26, 93). These positions have dispossessed the Whiteboys of agency in reconstituting the relations of the moral

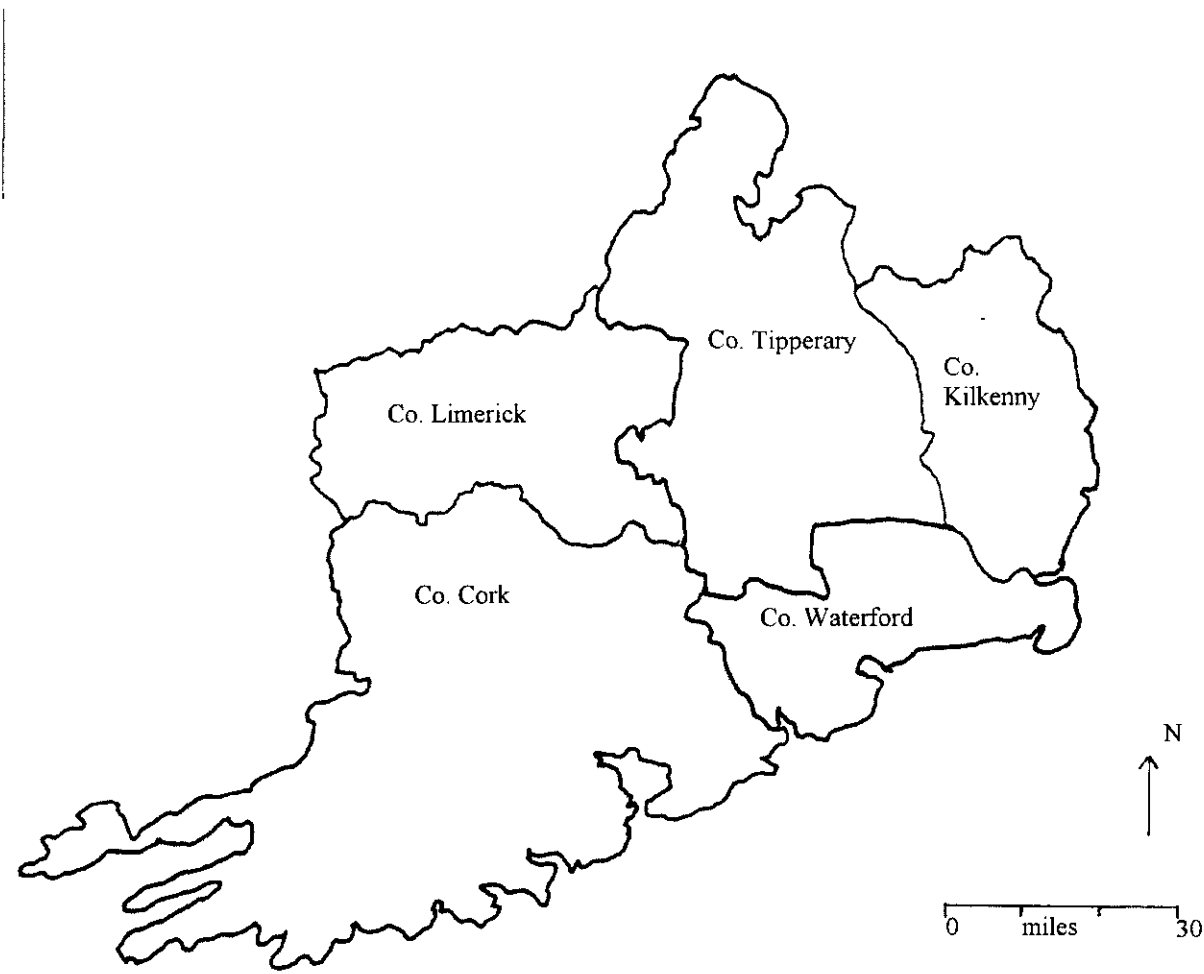
economy. Thus Whelan argues that popular culture ‘withered’ and degenerated into ‘disorder’ without the patronage of the Underground Gentry (Whelan, 1996: 27). Here I want to argue against this position and to emphasise that the Whiteboy movement appropriated and transformed the forms of popular culture and the legitimising notions associated with the moral economy and used them to negotiate emerging and unequal social and spatial relations.

The Whiteboys articulated the legitimising notions of the moral economy to threat and antagonism. A threatening letter sent to a tenant in County Tipperary in the early 1760s warned that the Levellers had combined to ‘level all walls and ditches [that] have been mid (sic) to enclose [that] which is ordained for ye benefit of ye poor. We [...] will not cease till we level down all ye commonage in this county’ (cited by Power, 1993: 179). The legitimising notions stated here appealed to the obligations of landlords and middlemen held to cottiers and labourers which were being transgressed through practices like enclosure. These tactics gained the Whiteboys some limited support from at least one ‘socially conscious’ priest, Father Nicholas Sheehy, and at least one contemporary pamphleteer.<sup>12</sup>

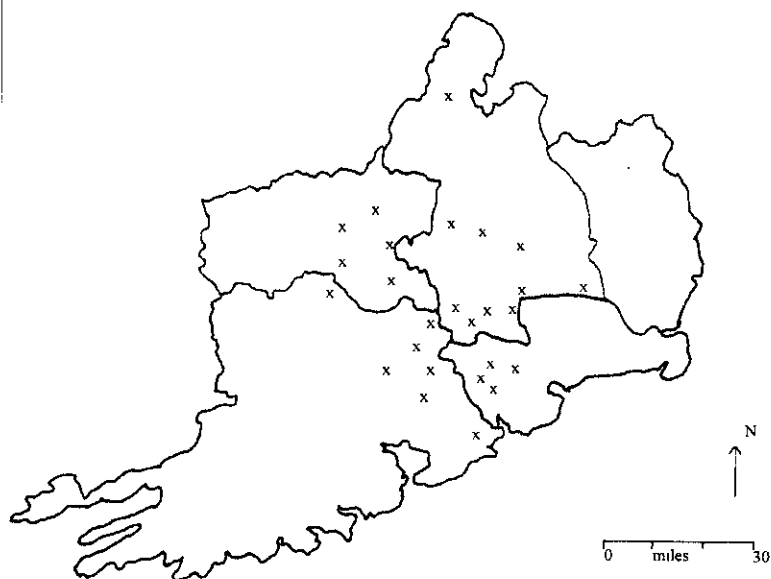
The actions of the Whiteboys thus dislocated forms of customary right from related traditions of deference.<sup>13</sup> These practices allied alternative notions of justice with emergent forms of solidarity through the organisation of the Whiteboys in oath bound secret societies. Their action was ‘audacious’.<sup>14</sup> It transgressed the compliance expected of labourers and cottiers. They levelled enclosures and walls; dug up land they wished to be used for tillage; sent anonymous threatening notices and letters; and engaged in violent forms of ‘exemplary intimidation’<sup>15</sup> of those who refused to comply with the orders stated in their declarations. They formed an associational culture with groups of men meeting at night dressed with female clothes particularly white shirts or dresses over their clothes: the practice from which the movement derived its name.

Their activity was characterised by audacious forms of territorialisation, the techniques through which identities are recursively constituted through particular uses and ways of producing spaces. They marched in sub military forms led by pipers.<sup>16</sup> They stole horses which they rode into towns like Clonmel at night marking their presence by shouting ‘Huzzas’ and blowing horns.<sup>17</sup> They dug mock graves along roadsides and assaulted houses at night.<sup>18</sup> They tore down the official proclamations issued to stop them and replaced them with their own notices.<sup>19</sup> They burned down the cabins of tenants who had taken the homes of displaced labourers.<sup>20</sup> They burned in effigy those who had presumed to put a stop to their combination.<sup>21</sup> They developed a formidable reputation for

gaol breaking.<sup>22</sup> The authorities resorted to transporting captured Whiteboys by water to prevent their being 'rescued'.<sup>23</sup> Their forms of political activity were mobile and easily mimicked. In the early 1760s oath bound organisations characterised by secrecy and violence circulated across the counties of Limerick, Cork, Tipperary and Waterford. By 1763 they had reached County Kilkenny, see figures 3.1-3.4.<sup>24</sup>

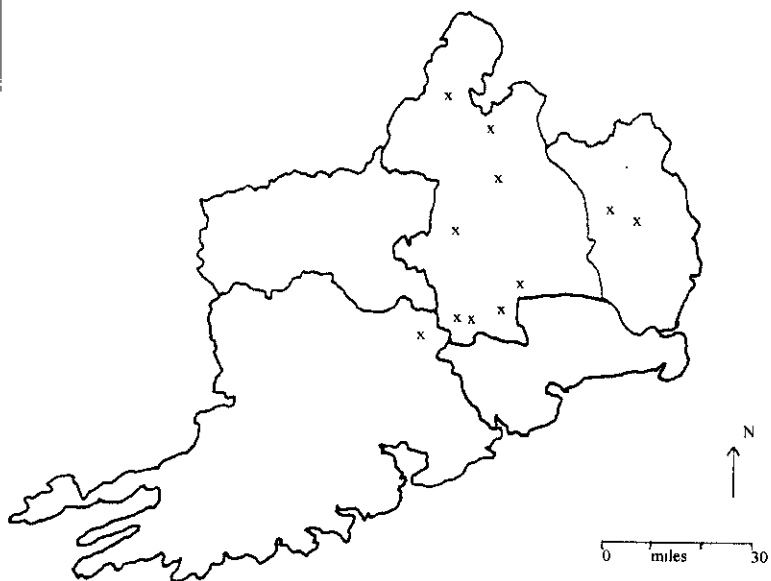


**Figure 3.1 Counties where Whiteboys were active in the 1760s.**

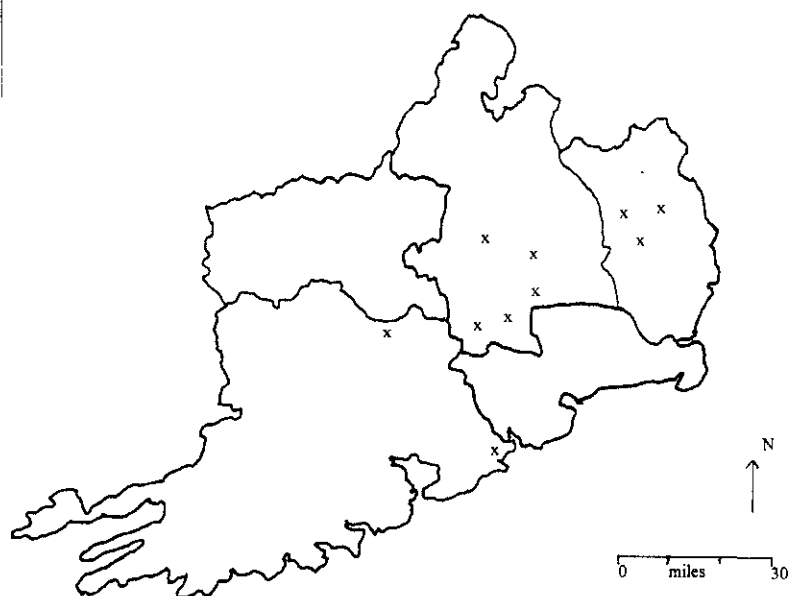


**Figure 3.2 Key Sites of Whiteboy Activity, 1761-2.**

**x = Site of Whiteboy Activity**



**Figure 3.3 Key Sites of Whiteboy Activity, 1763-4.**



**Figure 3.4 Key Sites of Whiteboy Activity, 1765-6.**

The forms of their action evoked a legitimacy among subaltern groups. They drew on carnivalesque idioms of dress and disguise that were associated with mummers, mayboys and strawboys.<sup>25</sup> These forms of popular culture had been partly patronised by the Underground Gentry<sup>26</sup> and were associated with particular seasonal festivities. Strawboys, for example, being ‘permitted to behave in a riotous manner at particular times of the year’ (Carpenter, 1998: 443n2). There is some evidence that Whiteboy action shared this strongly seasonal pattern (Power, 1993: 175; Wall, 1974: 15). The adoption of the guises of these groups allowed them to appear as an almost mythical force of judgement, something that was intensified by their signing of declarations with the names of mythical female figures such as Queen Sive or Joanna Meskell. Women were thus symbolically central to the movement but were excluded from the main organisational dynamics of the Whiteboys, though women were present at some crowd actions mobilised to support the Whiteboys.<sup>27</sup>

Figures like Sive and Meskell ‘hovered between the other world and every day life in the imagination of the peasantry’ and were associated with mythical traditions of the Kilkenny and Tipperary countryside (Gibbons, 1996b: 141; Corish, 1981: 125). The strategy of appearing as ‘otherworldly’ figures performing a legitimised judgement on behalf of the ‘community’ also involved adopting the guise of ‘fairies’. An informant writing in January 1762 noted that ‘above 500 men frequently assemble with shirts over



their clothes doing whatever mischief they please by night, under the sanction of being fairies' (Civil Petitions, Irish Record Office, cited by Lecky, 1892: 23). These forms of action and organisation were co-produced with particular assertive forms of masculinity. The 'fairies' being 'composed of all the able young men from Clonmel to Mitchelstown'<sup>28</sup> (Lecky, op. cit.).

Through such assertive forms of action these subaltern 'legislators' 'sought to enforce a whole series of regulations governing [...] tithes, land occupancy, landlord-tenant relations, wages, hearth-money, the cost and disposal of provisions' (Wall, 1973: 16). They also contested changes in usages of land attacking those 'who would not set their ground to the poor for tillage' (White, 1762). 'Four to five hundred' Whiteboys were observed by a post-boy in late March 1765 turning up the ground of a gentleman who had 'refused 50 shilling per acre for said ground for them to put potatoes in' (FDJ 1765, April 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>). These actions drew on and shaped an 'intense popular resentment at the keeping of land from tillage'<sup>29</sup> (Donnelly, 1978: 33). The spatial relations through which particular land uses were produced were not incidental, not just a background to the political activity of the Whiteboys. The way land was used and regulated was part of what was at stake through such action. A contestation of uses and practices around land was integral to the Whiteboys' alternative conceptions and executions of justice. Denunciation of the conduct of middlemen, referred to derisively as 'stock jobbers' or 'land pirates', in producing unequal spatial relations was a defining feature of Whiteboys' actions in the 1760s and beyond.

A threatening letter of 1762 addressed to a 'county meeting to concert measures for restoring order', or as Joanna Meskell expressed it, 'for defeating the method I have taken to ward off an impending famine', makes this clear. It noted that 'Upstarts [were] supplanting my poor people on expiration of their leases, and [stocking ] their lands with bullocks, a practice not known in any part of the world, Ireland only excepted' (cited by Froude, 1872: 28). This letter emphasises that Whiteboy activity was intervening in a wider context, and was not just a spontaneous reaction to the conduct of middlemen. Firstly, it articulates a memory and threat of famine, which would have been a powerful claim. The famine of 1741, twenty years earlier, had been most intense in the parts of Munster where Whiteboys became active in the 1760s (Dickson, 1997: 72-3). Mortality during this famine was at least 13-20% of the population (Dickson, 1997: 67-9). Munster had also been affected by dearth in 1756-7 (Fitzgerald, 1996: 115- 122). Articulating the threat of a famine was a way of intervening in the effects of social and spatial inequalities and emphasising their seriousness. Secondly, the defence of the terms of leases here

suggests the influence of the Ulster custom of tenant right.<sup>30</sup> Although tenant right was not recognised by the 'generality of southern landlords', Wall argues 'secret societies succeeded to some extent in enforcing' it together with 'other regulations which they believed necessary for their protection' (Wall, 1973: 24-25).

Whiteboy declarations were thus engaging in and reconstituting a relational context. They were not just isolated notices which drew only on a bounded and spontaneous local repertoire of legitimising notions. Neither did they just mimic dominant and official versions of the moral economy. Viewing these threatening letters and notices as relationally constituted can position the Whiteboys as actively reconstituting the associations of the moral economy. This involves approaching threatening letters as active in reconstituting relations rather than as frozen and isolated textual relics. The few Whiteboy anonymous threatening letters which have survived are a key source for study of the Whiteboys.<sup>31</sup> They are one of the few sources which are in the 'voice' of the Whiteboys, rather than being completely filtered through élite writing. I have attempted to foreground these 'unofficial knowledges' in this account to develop a focus on the character of subaltern agency<sup>32</sup> (Samuel, 1994: 3-48). I have also drawn on other forms of 'unofficial knowledges' such as the oral history and tradition about the Whiteboys taken down by the collectors of the Irish Folklore Commission in the mid part of the twentieth century.<sup>33</sup> For official correspondence and reports in contemporary newspapers tend to give a much better sense of divisions within élite politics than they do of Whiteboy activity. They also tend to make subaltern forms of organisation and grievance 'unrepresentable' (Lloyd, 1993: 144-5). Officials like the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland Lord Halifax also made it explicit that they had to rely on 'uncertain and popular rumour' to gain intelligence about the Whiteboys.<sup>34</sup>

But threatening letters cannot be treated as documents without context. To do so produces a sense of the Whiteboys' as merely reiterating the dominant notions and practices of the moral economy. Official sources are useful for dramatising how Whiteboy activity articulated their invocation of the moral economy in deeply threatening ways. Whiteboy activity 'performed threats' and alternative forms of justice in ways which reconstituted customary rights and intervened in existing spatial relations. Threatening notices and letters were part of aggressive strategies of territorialisation used to produce a very visible subaltern opposition to official authority. The Whiteboys' struggles to regulate tithes used threatening notices to create legitimacy for alternative regulations. Cottiers in Munster were required to pay tithes on the potatoes grown for their subsistence, though landlords had combined in 1735 to force 'the clergy to abandon their

claim to tithe on pasture land' (Wall, 1974: 13). Tithes, hated by 'all rural classes', were paid to the established church (Cullen, 1972: 84). Levied 'in an arbitrary and uneven manner' they had 'always to be settled in cash', increasing their inconvenience for the poor (Dickson, 2000: 149). Whiteboys used spaces such as church yards and church doors to place threatening notices setting out fair regulations of tithe.<sup>35</sup> Tythe Proctors, the officials who collected tithes, were also assaulted in these spaces. In October 1765 it was reported a party of Whiteboys 'forceably carried out a Tythe Proctor from his house to a church yard' beat him and dismissed him upon his 'taking an oath never more to deal in tythes' (FDJ, 1765, October 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>). Tythe Proctor's horses were also mutilated by Whiteboys.<sup>36</sup>

These aggressive forms of territorialisation articulated the moral economy to an assertive and threatening subaltern presence. This subaltern presence was also formed through positive relations to the commons and livestock and the associated social relations that these groups were defending. A very limited sense of the importance of smallholding and common land to commoners has emerged in recent Irish historiography, partly due to an over reliance on the 1776 tour of the English improver and agriculturalist Arthur Young.<sup>37</sup> This account is structured by a resolutely elite perspective and a hostility to commoning practices (Allen and O' Grada, 1988: 97; and Young, 1892, esp. vol II: 99). Humphries and Neeson have emphasised the importance of commons and customary rights for poor English families and have argued that the labouring poor constructed independent identities through these practices (Humphries, 1990; Neeson, 1993: 158 – 184). I have drawn on contemporary pamphlets and writings about agriculture in Ireland, as well as oral histories and other unofficial knowledges to reconstruct a sense of the importance of commoning practices to commoners in the areas where the Whiteboys were active.

There were diverse usages of commoning and smallholding spaces in Munster in the Eighteenth century. Oral tradition relating to commoners in Connabery in County Waterford, for example, suggests that rushes, which were used for lighting, bedding, thatching and basket-making, were collected from commons.<sup>38</sup> Diverse materials were collected for fuel. Many townships had rights to 'turbary', peat from nearby bogs (Willes, [1760] 1990: 73). Furze was collected for fuel as were thistles, 'the hawm [stubble] of our corn fields', waste wood and cow dung (Molesworth, 1723: 36, 37; Davidson, 1982: 76). A Select Committee on the State of Disease, and Condition of the Labouring Poor in Ireland, recorded that in periods of famine 'nettles and other succulent wild vegetables [were] eagerly sought after to satisfy the cravings of hunger' (P.P. 1821: 20, see also

Triptolemus, 1741: 62).<sup>39</sup> Nettles and charlock, a spinach like plant, were particularly important in the spring and summer to fill the gap before the new crops of potatoes matured (Lucas, 1958: 140-1; Dickson, 1997: 26; Mabey, 1972: 103).

Pressure was exerted on these usages as part of the formation of more intensive and commercial forms of agriculture. The displacement of 'small occupiers by sheep and cattle was merely the most obvious aspect of a broader process by which greater commercialisation undermined traditional concepts of right and obligation' (Connolly, 1987: 153-4). Young makes frequent reference to the removal of furze, used for fuel and fodder, during improvements (see Young, 1892, vol. 1: 380, 413). The poet Sean Clarach MacDonaill noted that the hated Tipperary landlord James Dawson savagely punished 'the abject' who 'dragged off brushwood or sticks or bits of bushes' from his land<sup>40</sup> (MacDonaill, 1981: 173). Customary rights were increasingly recoded as theft or pilfering. Arthur Young's account of the labouring poor in Ireland in the mid 1770s develops an obsessive account of their pilfering 'disposition' (see Young, 1892, vol.1: 60, 64, 68, 99, 109, 175, 238, 429, 455, see also Molesworth, 1723). Whiteboy activity was related to these broader 'everyday forms of resistance' through which the Irish labouring poor refused to perform the passive, compliant subjectivities in relation to spaces and non-humans expected by disciplinary techniques such as enclosure.

These commoning spaces and practices were also used to sustain patterns of mobility, such as seasonal migration to England.<sup>41</sup> For these spaces were at the intersection of routes of subaltern activity as well as being related to transnational trade networks. The Whiteboy movement was constituted through relations to subaltern political and popular culture in towns like Carrick-on-Suir, Tallow and Glanworth where weaving was important.<sup>42</sup> '[R]egular interchanges between farm work and weaving' meant that weavers were familiar with key Whiteboy grievances (Donnelly, 1978:39). There were joint actions between Whiteboys and weavers in Carrick on Suir in the early 1770s (Donnelly, 1983: 314). These actions targeted spalpeens, migrant labourers, emphasising how Whiteboy activity could negotiate antagonisms between different subaltern groups.

Through these connections the Whiteboys formed part of a relational context of vibrant appropriations of customary right and sanctioned direct action by the urban and rural poor in eighteenth century Ireland. There were important continuities between forms of Whiteboy activity and subaltern politics in towns like Carrick and Clonmel. There were food riots in the Munster towns of Carrick on Suir, Youghal, Clonmel, Limerick, Waterford and Cork, during the famines of 1729, 1741 and in the dearth of 1757.<sup>43</sup> These acts were sanctioned by legitimising notions. In Waterford in 1757, 'a crowd that seized

forty tons of oatmeal near the city did not steal or destroy it, but 'retailed it out' in the town's market' (Garnham, 1996: 200). An act against combinations formed to prevent the removal of grain during the famine of 1756 criminalised many of the forms of action that the Whiteboys developed such as the use of Anonymous Threatening Letters.<sup>44</sup>

These subaltern political cultures were part of the unofficial geographies of knowledge and activity of an 'Atlantic working class'. The Whiteboy's focus on the conduct of particular actors was part of broader forms of invocation of customary right in the face of petty tyranny that circulated around the Atlantic in the eighteenth century. Stories from West Limerick relating to a 'known Whiteboy' Seamus N'Ean suggest that '[h]is sympathies were with the farmers against the whole landlord following especially well known petty tyrants and their greedy masters.'<sup>45</sup> These sympathies resonate with the forms of collectivism generated by 'an international moral economy of common tars' in the first part of the eighteenth century (Rediker, 1988: 291). Sailors used tactics of desertion to escape the 'the grasp of a brutal master or mate' (Rediker, 1988: 101-2), their notions of fair conduct circulating in their hybrid forms of popular culture such as shanties.<sup>46</sup>

Whiteboys were integrated into these routes and exchanges of subaltern activity through patterns of mobility such as seasonal migration to the fisheries in Newfoundland<sup>47</sup> and to England for harvest work. There were moral panics about Irish harvesters in England in the mid eighteenth century. A citizen of London wrote 'I cannot help mentioning the mischief of Importing so many poor Irish every year under pretence of hay-making', advocating a system of passes to remedy this 'evil' (A Citizen of London, 1751: 17-20; see also Fielding, 1751). Military repression 'led the Munster Whiteboys to exile in 1765' (Miller, 1985: 144). This exile followed existing routes to Newfoundland and England.<sup>48</sup> Edward Langman, a Newfoundland based missionary, noted in November 1766 that 'a greater number of poor Irishmen [were] brought here this spring from Waterford, than has been known in the years before'.<sup>49</sup> It was 'strongly imagined, that many of them were of the White Boys in Ireland'.<sup>50</sup> These routes of action contributed to an experience of mobility, constituted through interconnections between poor English and Irish, which was profoundly ambivalent about authority.<sup>51</sup> Langman noted in November of 1767 that 'the Irish here [...] mob frequently'.<sup>52</sup> The number of migrants noted by Langman and his colleagues gives some support to the claim that this phase of Whiteboy activity disintegrated due to the pressure of an epidemic of small pox, bad harvests and mass starvation (Donnelly, 1978: 52-54).

The appellation Whiteboys was also used frequently in accounts of the activity of Irish coal heavers in the London Port strikes of May, 1768 (Linebaugh and Rediker, 1991: 21-

30). These 'adventurous coal heavers' were among the most assertive of a number of trades that struck.<sup>53</sup> The possible influence of Whiteboy activity on the conduct of the mainly Irish London Coal heavers in these disputes is one of the best documented of the subaltern connections that made up the activity of the 'Atlantic working class' in this period. The Solicitor General argued that some of these coal heavers 'were from the gangs of Whiteboys in Ireland'.<sup>54</sup> Horace Walpole refused to demarcate between them, noting in late June 1768 that 'those black dogs the Whiteboys or Coal heavers are dispersed or taken' (Walpole ([1768]: 324).

Trying to make sense of these interconnections raises important methodological questions. The assertions that there were interconnections between the Whiteboys and Coal heavers were made in official papers and newspapers, not the most reliable sources of accurate information on subaltern politics. Chapter 4 begins to substantiate the importance of these connections by examining continuities in modes of action and organisation between these groups. This follows Thompson's judgement that it cannot be assumed that the assertions about subaltern politics made in official papers are 'bound to be false' (Thompson, 1968: 648). I have situated Whiteboys' and coal heavers' performances as products of multiple routes and intersections of activity rather than attributing to such activity a 'purity of origins' (Roach, 1996: 286). I have also triangulated the detailed prosecution briefs and accounts of trials of coal heavers, with contemporary newspaper reports, and pamphlets relating to the coal trade and crime on the Thames. This has helped develop a sense of the histories of coal and geographies of coal heavers' activity, the character of their interventions in contested relations over materials such as coal and the way their activity was constituted through both co-operation and antagonism with other subaltern groups.

Pointing to significant continuities in the forms of action and organisation between diverse and interconnected groups is a way of suggesting both the plausibility of these connections and arguing that they had effects. The forms of assertive identity deployed by Whiteboy movements and associations were the site of intersections of routed activity which in turn had effects elsewhere. The Whiteboys, which one nineteenth century observer likened to a 'vast trades' union for the protection of the Irish peasantry' (Lewis, 1836: 99), had a productive agency in forming assertive identities and activity among the eighteenth and early nineteenth century Irish peasantry. Wall has argued that these combinations may have prevented the kind of 'whole-sale eviction which took place in Scotland in the last half of the eighteenth century' (Wall, 1973: 24). This is not a groundless assessment. Pamphlets published in the mid eighteenth century refer very

casually to the idea of re-populating Munster with Protestants, drawing on the potent histories of 'transplantation' of Catholic Irish during the Cromwellian land settlement.<sup>55</sup> The action of the unofficial 'legislators' of the Whiteboys was significant in contesting the gentry's attempts to 'grind the face of the poor'.<sup>56</sup>

### **3.3 Pure Genius: Making land in London a political antagonism**

On May Day bank holiday 1996, about 200 activists occupied Gargoyle Wharf, a twelve acre derelict site on the Thames waterfront in North Wandsworth, London. The land, which had been derelict and enclosed for 7 years, had previously been a brewery and oil depot before becoming a casualty of Guinness's asset stripping of Distillers. Activists moved prefabricated structures such as Yurts on to the land, structures to house communal debate, kits for making compost toilets and for make-shift dwellings. Large quantities of compost and top soil were moved on to the site to construct garden beds on this site which was potentially contaminated due to its past industrial uses. Gargoyle Wharf quickly became a semi-permanent home for about fifty people, many of them homeless, who helped construct self-build dwellings with material mainly coming from skips near the site. The site remained an 'eco-village' until October 15<sup>th</sup> 1996, when bailiffs in full riot gear evicted it at five o' clock in the morning and Guinness's agents began to bulldoze the dwellings.

The activists were mobilised by the recently formed land rights campaign for Britain, The Land is Ours (TLIO). Squatting such a big, high profile site was an exciting, audacious intervention. It was a novel form of action for the contemporary UK direct action movement. There was uncertainty as to how the action would work, but broad agreement behind this attempt to demonstrate sustainable and socially equitable uses of derelict land in Britain's cities. *Siting the occupation on this land was part of an explicit attempt to challenge the unequal power relations shaping contemporary urbanisation. It imaginatively connected ideas about urban environments with urban poverty; juxtaposing arguments about the need for affordable housing with the need for creative use and appreciation of green spaces within the city. The importance of the wasteland ecology of Gargoyle Wharf emerged through the action, as London Wildlife Trust Surveyors gained access to the site for the first time (Bertrand, 1996).*

The audacity of the occupation was constituted in relation to the choice of the Gargoyle Wharf site. As one of the initial co-ordinators of the action argued the site's 'rare, prime riverside location in a European capital city' made it a 'perfect place in which to demonstrate the ideas of forward thinking sustainable urban development' (Knight,

1997: 1-2). Siting the occupation in Wandsworth produced a focus on the effects of one of the 'laboratories of Thatcherism'. Wandsworth Borough Council was one of the most aggressively Thatcherite local councils in the UK.<sup>57</sup> The site starkly illustrated the active social polarisation that this New Right experiment had produced, see figures 3.2 and 3.3. It was overlooked on one side by a luxury housing development, and on the other by a poorly maintained social housing project. The enclosed site illustrated how marginalised social groups were excluded from many of the green spaces that did exist. The occupation also sought to demonstrate how marginalised groups and 'local people' were systematically excluded from the planning process. This was related to an indictment of vastly inflated land values and their effects on the possible uses and futures of spaces like Gargoyle Wharf. The site was later sold by Guinness to a consortium of Frogmore Estates and Rialto Homes for an estimated £15 million (*Financial Times*, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1997).

The occupation circumvented dominant rhythms of power.<sup>58</sup> The Wandsworth site symbolised many aspects of the hostile direction of contemporary urbanisation. But it was also a site on which a fairly long term land squat could be established. It offered a space around which the occupation could begin to define itself in positive ways through its own uses of the site rather than solely in negative opposition to the power of dominant groups. It was deliberately chosen because the Police were likely to have a marginal interest in it; a marked contrast to the key sites of power targeted by recent *Reclaim the Streets* protests such as the City on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1999 and Parliament on May Day, 2000 and Oxford Street, on May Day, 2001. In legal terms this tactic worked. On the morning of the occupation, Police declared the occupation a civil matter between the occupiers and Guinness. This tactic of actively circumventing confrontation 'built non-violence into the logic of the event'.<sup>59</sup>

Though the eco-village was eventually evicted, the occupation had a catalysing effect on attempts to shape the future of the site.<sup>60</sup> One of the outcomes of the occupation was the formation of the 'Gargoyle Wharf Community Action Group' (GWCAG) which sought to continue a debate about the site and to ensure it was developed 'in a way that meets the needs of local people' (GWCAG, 1997: 2). The political constituency that formed around the site has continued to have effects. In 1999 the Government Office for London served an Article 14 Stop Notice on a planning application for a luxury development on the site by a consortium of Rialto Homes and Frogmore Estates. On Monday 29th January, 2001, GWCAG were granted permission to bring judicial review proceedings against 'Wandsworth Council and Rialto Homes' in regard to a proposed development of 5 sixteen-storey tower-blocks on the grounds of an inadequate



environmental impact assessment (Land is Ours, 2001).

The research into this case study has been part of an ongoing engagement with the campaign around this site. For research into the formation of political identities cannot be conducted without engaging with the action through which these identities are formed and



**Figure 3.5: View of Gargoyl Wharf overlooked by luxury housing**



**Figure 3.6: View of Gargoyl Wharf overlooked by social housing**

negotiated. Aspects of my engagement with the campaign predate the period of funded research for the thesis. I participated in the initial occupation of Gargoyle Wharf, visiting the site several times over the summer and Autumn of 1996 and was dragged off a roof during the eviction. In early spring-summer of 1997 I became involved in the organisation of the Land is Ours as a volunteer at the organisation's office in Oxford. This included being part of TLIO's continuing engagement with the Wandsworth campaign. TLIO has maintained an engagement with the site through ongoing activity, covering GWCAG's campaigns in the TLIO newsletter and attending GWCAG events (see Land is Ours, 1997, 2000, 2001). A friend and I attended a 'community participation' event convened by GWCAG, in June, 1997, to debate the future of the site. We made notes about this process, after we felt it was evading some of the key power relations the occupation had engaged with.<sup>61</sup> While based in Oxford I also finished drafting a discussion article engaging with the politics of the occupation which I discussed with other Land is Ours activists (Featherstone, 1998).

As well as continuing this engagement with the Land is Ours<sup>62</sup>, I have drawn on other sources, such as London Wildlife Trusts' archive about the site and testimonies of residents of the Pure Genius site from the Land is Ours website.<sup>63</sup> I conducted a long interview with Bruce MacKenzie of GWCAG in May, 1999, to engage with the practices of GWCAG and the developing contexts of their activity.<sup>64</sup> The interview was carried out in an active style. It was conducted as an engagement with the activist's ideas and practices, rather than as a passive encounter. In the interview I hesitantly tried to engage and make explicit what I felt were some of the tensions of the Planning for Real event. I felt it was necessary to make these tensions explicit, if I was going to explore how they were being negotiated by activists like Bruce. This is part of the way the research has adopted 'entangled practices of research' which are constituted through engaging with activity rather than adopting a distant or participant observer position. For possibilities exist 'for escaping the oppositional roles of 'interviewer/ interviewee' or 'academy/ activist' which can 'communicat[e] something else beyond the positions power consigns us to' (Rose, 1997a: 202).

The research also drew on involvement with the networks of the direct action movement, and previous research into Pollok Free State, the community constructed by those campaigning against the M77 in Glasgow. The land occupation was both inspired by and an intervention in the forms of political activity that had coalesced around the anti-roads movement. By the mid 90s the UK anti-roads movement had begun to form an engagement with urban politics. The campaigns against the M11 and the M77 on the

Southside of Glasgow had become nodes of opposition where concern about the destruction of environments and about social justice were being articulated together.<sup>65</sup> The connections made at the M11 and M77 protests are important examples of how political activity at particular sites can be generative of the formation of new equivalences and alliances.<sup>66</sup> The Land is Ours' occupation was an attempt to provide a positive direction for these new alliances.

The occupation was oriented towards the formation of a political space which would facilitate the creation of demonstrable alternatives. This was based around a critique of the 'largely responsive' character of the direct action movement (Monbiot, cited by McKay 1996: 127). The *Land is Ours* had been formed after a direct action conference in Oxford in December 1994, at which 'several people expressed the need to ... start demanding what we did want rather than concentrating on protesting against what we didn't' (Monbiot, 1998: 174). Land rights emerged as an engagement which could unite different strands and idioms of action. The Land is Ours organised an occupation of land in Surrey in 1994, and inspired by the brief success of this event, began planning a larger, higher profile occupation in London.

This occupation was the product, and site of meeting up, of many different routes of political activity.<sup>67</sup> It drew inspiration from the high profile land occupations of the Brazilian land rights campaign, Movimento Sem Terra (MST) (Monbiot, 1998: 180; Petras, 1997: 24). The MST's commitment to a strategy of 'pedagogy by example', demonstrating what can be achieved through practical alternatives, has been a continuing influence on the Land is Ours (Stedile, 1999). The inspiration of MST intersected with the diverse unofficial knowledges and practices of the Advisory Service for Squatters (ASS), the hub of the London squatting scene. An ASS activist researched a number of possible sites for the occupation drawing on the squatting scene's detailed unofficial knowledges of London. The occupation also drew on ASS's formidable knowledges of squatting law. In the mid 90s they were at the forefront of campaigns to show that, despite the anti-squatting provisions in section V of the *Criminal Justice and Public Order Act*, squatting was still 'legal, necessary and free' (ASS, 1996; HM Government, 1994: 54-59).

These interconnections produced an intensification of political identities and practices. The occupation also hailed activists as part of a broader, history of contestation of 'English' land rights.<sup>68</sup> The occupation commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the post war squatting movement when 'demobbed servicemen took over a thousand derelict sites' (Land Is Ours, 1997).<sup>69</sup> This was part of the Land is Ours' ongoing project to celebrate histories of contestation of land rights in the UK. This contested the narratives of a

purified English countryside of land owners and blood sports which were being powerfully mobilised in the Criminal Justice Act (Sibley, 1995: 107; Halfacree, 1996). The occupation drew together diverse elements of the opposition to this Act. 'Being early May there were plenty of activists floating about, with all of the on route evictions completed on the Newbury by-pass, and the Rainbow Centre<sup>70</sup> cleaned out a few months before' (Brendan, 1996: 1).

These various routes of assertive political identities constituted something approximating to what Lefebvre described as the 'right to the city'. Lefebvre defined this as the right to direct and shape the character and direction of the city through forms of participation and appropriation which are distinct from the right to property and the right to visit the city (Lefebvre, 1996: 147-159). The appropriation of Gargoyle Wharf and the construction of a squatted community characterised by 'self organisation and diverse uses of space'<sup>71</sup>, for art, for dwellings, for producing food, for leisure, and for imaginative co-existence with the non humans of the site, illustrated how it was possible that this right to the city could be asserted. The site acted, albeit briefly and ambiguously, as a node for demonstration of new experiments in urban living.<sup>72</sup>

The different practices through which these forms of experimental living were developed produced the site in plural ways rather than through a consensual version of what the site should be. They also produced it in relation to very different networks of resistance and activity. Different forms of 'inhabitation' were also adopted in relation to the site. The occupation did not follow an already constituted blueprint but rather experimented with what Hinchliffe describes as 'progressive forms of inhabitation through practical engagements' (Hinchliffe, 2001: 34). Nevertheless the occupation experimented with the principles of 'permaculture', 'the design of an ecologically sound way of living'.<sup>73</sup> These principles were adopted through techniques such as the planting and maintenance of raised beds and irrigated spiral gardens and the site became integrated in to wider networks of permaculture activity (Hunt, 1997: 1). For London Wildlife Trust surveyors the site was part of an ongoing investigation and celebration of the unique kinds of wasteland ecologies found in London (Bertrand, 1996). Other activists were more ambivalent about celebrating the urban context of the site.

Bill Knight's account of living at the occupation stresses the excitement of 'waking early with the first light and watching the river and the wildlife on the site' (Knight, 1997: 5). But it also suggests how the anti-urbanism of much green political culture had effects on the commitment to this urban project. He argued that his 'deep dislike of city life' meant he had no long term intentions to stay on the site (ibid.). There were other uses of

the site which produced the site through carnivalesque practices. 'Some 'residents' brought musical equipment with them from sound systems to instruments, which enlivened the scene' (Halfacree, 1999: 212). One activist described the occupation as a 'place where people could be and allowed to have fun' (Brendan, 1997: 3). This produced a version of politics characterised by ludic practices, such as late night food fights, and by freedom from authority as opposed to a positive construction of freedom as the space to create an alternative. These practices were intensified as the occupation became progressively linked to networks of homeless encampments and squats as the core of the activists who set up the site left after the first week. This intensified stresses on the daily life of the 'community', which had been there from the outset: communal meetings on the first weekend had been disrupted by violent behaviour and drunkenness.

These tensions and problems had effects, including problems in the formation of spaces of negotiation about the life of the site. I found it an inspiring place at times. At other times I found it a scary and intimidating place to be or to take friends to. In the wake of the eviction, however, there was a tendency to scapegoat sections of the urban excluded/ poor for these tensions<sup>74</sup>. This evaded the need to relate these tensions to the power relations and structure of the campaign. An over-reliance on creating the site as a demonstration site meant that at times the construction of the image of the site for various medias was more important than producing a functioning/ durable 'sustainable community'. The difficulties and tensions of integrating the marginalised urban excluded into the campaign are developed in detail in Chapter 6. These tensions placed stress on the broad constituency of support mobilised in relation to the site.

The formation of a broad constituency of support which exceeded the limits of a small activist subculture was one of the achievements of the occupation. The morning that the occupation was evicted, residents of the social housing in York Road hung banners from their balconies declaring support for the occupation. Many were outside the gates of the site to greet residents/ protesters as they were forcibly led off the site by bailiffs. Some were probably drawn by curiosity. But this symbolised quite powerfully the success that the land occupation had in building up a multi-faceted political constituency active around the site. This political constituency was formed through linking an activist subculture with people local to the site who had been actively marginalised from shaping its futures.

These connections had also come together in a Public Inquiry into a proposal for the development of a supermarket on the site, held at the time of the occupation. The evidence of Land is Ours, London Wildlife Trust and Green Party activists at the Inquiry developed a many-sided contestation of the proposed land use. The submissions



connected issues about the lack of affordable housing, about green/ public space, the ecology of the site, the impact of the development on traffic, the part-time, low skilled and poorly paid nature of the employment being created and the absence of renewable energy sources.<sup>75</sup> There were significant differences in the tone of the different submissions. Flora Gathorne Hardy's submission on behalf of the Land is Ours argued that 'local people's desire' was 'to see the Gargoyle Wharf site used to combat the acute shortage of affordable housing within Wandsworth borough' (Gathorne Hardy, 1996: 20-21). This submission adopted a specifically human politics around the site which contrasts markedly with Bertrand's celebration of the way that 'wildlife has transformed an area only recently cleared into a refuge [...] for wildlife' (Bertrand, 1996: 5-6).

Through this many-sided contestation of the unequal and unsustainable processes shaping land use, the Land is Ours was active in shaping and producing a multiple political constituency around the site. It articulated the processes shaping land as sites of conflict, antagonism and unequal power relations. After the eviction this political constituency became translated into new forms of action. Gargoyle Wharf Community Action Group was formed by people resident near to the site to continue debate and action about the site. The activity of GWAG has helped to keep the wharf a contested space for the 5 years since the occupation was evicted. It has also broadened out to link with other campaigns against the development of similar sites along the Thames Waterfront (GWCAG, 1999).

The style of action and participants in GWCAG were often quite different from the occupation. Inspired by the critiques of planning that had been articulated by the Land is Ours, and frustrated by the official planning process, GWCAG set up an informal 'planning for real' consultation which is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. This engagement with planning developed in parallel with TLIO's adoption of a strategy to contest access to the decision making structures which have effects on land.<sup>76</sup> GWCAG's politics was tightly focused around the need for affordable housing in Wandsworth. In 1996, in Wandsworth borough, 5,877 households were on housing waiting lists and the new right council had made social housing a low priority, failing to carry out 'rigorous housing needs assessment despite government advice' (Gathorne Hardy, 1996: 20-21). Some of the key activists in GWCAG had direct personal experience of the effects of these housing shortages.<sup>77</sup> GWCAG also continued a focus on the relations between the 'inner cabal' of the Conservative group on Wandsworth borough council and the continuing power of property developers<sup>78</sup>.

Halfacree (1999: 209) notes that GWCAG's politics was more 'conventional' than

those of the land occupation. But it is not productive to draw too strong a distinction. The formation of GWCAG illustrates that an activist subculture need not necessarily function as a sealed neo-tribal identity. There were tensions between GWCAG and Pure Genius, a group formed by ex-residents of the site, who didn't attend events like the Planning for Real. But the diverse exchanges formed through the occupation suggest that the activity of activist subcultures can be productive of unexpected effects. These can include inspiring other marginalised groups to become involved in political contestation of land use. The movement between different forms and styles of politics can be productive of equivalences, and the formation of broad political constituencies.

The occupation of Gargoyle Wharf deployed and tested out some modes of political practice which imaginatively entangled issues of urban ecology and social justice. Through connecting aspects of urban ecology and social justice it ruptured some of the political and intellectual limits of the contemporary green movement. Though the drawing together of these issues was timely and imaginative, there were significant tensions in the politics over how the urban excluded were to be integrated into this kind of urban direct action politics. The coming together of different assertive political identities and practices through the interconnections of London's squatting movement, the anti-roads movement and the inspiration of MST was generative of a powerful articulation of a right to the city. One of the successes of the occupation was the formation of a multiple political constituency in relation to the site. This multiple political constituency formed plural and contested rights to the city which produced the site as part of different networks and political engagements. One of the common threads that held these different engagements together was a contestation of some of the power-geometries shaping urbanisation. These diverse interventions made some of the traces of power constituting existing forms of capitalist urbanisation visible and part of the 'terrain of contestation'.<sup>79</sup>

### **3.4 The Inter-Continental Caravan: 'our resistance is as transnational as capital.'**<sup>80</sup>

June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1999, in the town of Leverkusen, outside Cologne. 4-500 Indian farmers, together with a small number of activists from other social movements, and a contingent of mainly young direct activists from all over Europe marched through the town past the plant of the multi-national Bayer. This diverse group joined together in shouting slogans against the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Accompanied by musicians, including a fiery German piper, we converged on the town square. There, speakers from Leverkusen raised protest about the effects of the chemical plant on the town's environment. Speakers from Nepal and Brazil spoke against the dominance of multinationals and about the frequency

of advertising of Bayer products on Brazilian TV. An activist from the Indian Karnataka State Farmers Union spoke against the pressure to adopt non-traditional farming methods which she argued imposed a heavy reliance on chemicals. Other Indian speakers spoke against the high prices of the chemical fertilisers produced by Bayer. The makeshift stage was also used for some powerful collective singing.

The meeting up of these diverse trajectories of resistance outside the Bayer plant in Leverkusen was one of the actions convened by the Inter-Continental Caravan for Solidarity and Resistance (ICC). The ICC brought to Western Europe '450 representatives of grassroots movements from the South and East of the world' (People's Global Action Against Free Trade (PGA), 1999a). The majority were from Indian New Farmers' Movements, the KRRS and the Bharatia Kisan Union (BKU). There were other Indian activists including 'fisherfolk, the indigenous Adivasis and anti-dam movements' and also representatives of non Indian movements. These included activists from MST, 'Zapatista support groups from Mexico, the landless women's movement of Bangladesh, the mothers of Plaza de Mayo from Argentina, the Mapuche people of Chile, the Process of Black Communities from Columbia, environmental organisations from the Ukraine, human rights organisations from Nepal, etc.' (ibid.).

The Caravan was received by diverse groups in Europe, including 'organisations of the unemployed, groups fighting genetic engineering, squatted social centres, feminist organisations' who invited the caravan participants to over 12 countries. The action in Leverkusen had been organised by a radical group on the works council at Bayer which had a history of internationalism. It had forged alliances in the past with Brazilian workers' movements.<sup>81</sup> Activists from this works council group had seen the presence of the Caravan in Cologne to protest against the G7 as a chance to bring together some of the disparate strands of resistance against Bayer and other multi-nationals. It catalysed their activity. They had never organised a full scale public demonstration against their employer before. In this way the different geographies and interconnections of those struggling against Bayer and other multinationals became integral to the identity and character of the action. The significance of the geography of the protest was not lost on Bayer. Bayer's company newsletter for 17<sup>th</sup> June, argued under the headline '*Demonstration am falschen Platz*'<sup>82</sup> that the site of the demonstration was misguided as Bayer were not involved in bio-technology (Bayer, 1999).

This action was part of a wider opposition to neo-liberal globalisation. June 18<sup>th</sup>, the date of the meeting of the G7 in Cologne, was chosen by 'an unprecedented coalition of Western environmental activists and Third World social movements' for 'a global day of



protest' (Lynas, 1999). This day of action against 'global capitalism' targeted 'financial centres all over the world'<sup>83</sup> (PGA, 1999). The Caravan project itself emerged from the transnational networks and alliances involved in the global day of action on June 18<sup>th</sup>. The stories activists themselves told about the ICC's formation focused on the catalysing role of the Encuentros organised by the Zapatistas and their support networks.<sup>84</sup> The Zapatistas, through their assault on 1<sup>st</sup> January against a North American Free Trade Agreement that included Mexico's indigenous populations 'only as disposable waste' (Marcos, 1995: 73), did much to circulate and intensify anti neo-liberal political identities.<sup>85</sup> The Zapatistas hailed their transnational support networks as part of the same movement and the same anti-neo liberal struggles.

They developed this approach to the forms of solidarity they were generating through convening two large international gatherings, the Encuentros 'for humanity and against neoliberalism' which took place in Mexico in 1996 and in Spain in 1997.<sup>86</sup> These events were generative of unofficial alliances, friendships and meetings that crossed between different activist groupings and cultures. One of the outcomes of these meetings was the formation of the network People's Global Action Against Free Trade (PGA), the network of grassroots resistance movements which convened and organised the Caravan. The PGA network is defined by 'a rejection of reformist, NGO-style 'top down' approaches to resistance, a call to direct action and a non-hierarchical structure with no office, no employees and no HQ; relying instead on regional 'convenors' who would attempt to facilitate activity in their respective areas' (Townes, 1999). It draws on the involvement of major grassroots movements of the South such as the KRRS and MST, and movements based in Western Europe and the US, such as *Reclaim the Streets* and the French Peasant Confederation. The PGA's rejection of reformist approaches to resistance followed the Zapatistas' attempt to transcend vanguardist practices of radical political action. The Zapatistas rather than seeking direct control of the state have sought to create an opening in civil society, drawing on 'popular resistance to conventional forms of participation' (Esteve, 1994: 85).

This critique of conventional forms of participation and solidarity fed directly into the formation of the ICC project. The Caravan project traced some of the key common 'enemies' of movements like the KRRS and European green and social justice activists. These enemies were contested through joint 'non-violent actions against the most important centres of power of the [European] continent' (PGA, 1999a). The Caravan followed and intensified two key strands of resistance that have been brought together through the actions of organisations like the KRRS, the interrelated opposition to neo-

liberal globalisation and to the genetic modification of plants. During the three week project there were demonstrations and actions at key financial centres. The Caravan was involved in a march through the City of London, and in demonstrations at the Stock Exchange in Leoncavallo, Italy, outside the offices of the WTO in Geneva on June 9th and during the G8 meeting in Cologne. There were concerted actions against genetic modification of seeds. There were demonstrations against Cargill in Amsterdam, actions against Monsanto in Belgium and the Max Planck institute in Cologne, and solidarity actions with anti-genetics campaigners from Britain and the French peasant/farmer movement *Confederation Paysanne*.<sup>87</sup>

These actions brought together multiple trajectories of resistance. They created a political space for the convergence of some of the most vibrant anti-globalisation and anti-genetics campaign(er)s. The ICC sought to bring together activists from the North and South through shared participation in direct actions and demonstrations. This disrupted the usual 'calls for solidarity with the south' and sought to establish equivalences through opposition to common enemies. It was based around a unequivocal 'message' to dominant groups like the G8 leaders that:

'We do not want your charity, we do not want your loans' Those in the North have to understand our struggle is part of their own. We all face the same future.

(Unattributed quotation on ICC leaflet, 1999).

Constructing joint actions between activists from North and South was an arduous and complex process. These joint actions negotiated the differentiated power geometries and uneven operation of visa regulations and systems across Europe. These exclusionary spaces of politics combined with some of the logistical difficulties of organising what some activists dubbed a 'Totally Crazy Project'. Organisational difficulties which led to the late submission of visa applications were exacerbated by the operation of the boundaries to free movement of people being promoted by neo-liberal globalisation.

Although Schengen and most Swiss visas 'miraculously turned up' at the very last moment', ICC participants were refused entry into Poland, the Czech Republic, Finland, Switzerland and UK (ICC, 1999a). 37 Indians were allowed into the UK, but those belonging to the KRRS were refused entry, arguably for political reasons because of their high profile involvement in direct action. KRRS activists complained of being treated 'like untouchables' by the British high commission in Madras, where 19 activists were

arrested after protesting about being refused visas (*The Guardian*, 1999, May 27th; *Economic Times*, 1999, 24th May). The Visa process also exerted pressure on the possibilities of participants and action. To obtain British visas participants needed to provide bank details, details of their land possessions and prove they had enough money to support themselves in the UK. This was despite having letters from welcoming groups and MPs (*The Guardian*, *ibid.*). The itinerary of the Caravan in the UK had to be sent to the Foreign Office to be vetted. This led to accusations from some activists that the entire project was compromised through having to engage with these official power relations (Do or Die, 1999: 28). This also emphasises how VISA controls exert pressure on the spaces of politics needed to form what Held has described as ‘cosmopolitan citizenship’ (Held, cited by Mouffe, 1999b: 39).

The geography of European visa controls also had effects on the organisational structure of the ICC. There was a fairly centralised organisational process for the Schengen countries, as participants could gain a single visa for entry in to these nations.<sup>88</sup> But there were separate organising committees for the Caravan in non Schengen states such as the UK. My initial point of contact with the ICC was through the London Welcoming Committee. From March 1999, until the arrival of the Caravan in late May I attended the weekly meetings of the London Welcoming Committee. These were held in an ex-squatted arts centre called Strike, in Fashion Street, off Brick Lane. Attending these meetings was part of a commitment to engage with the quotidian political and spatial practices through which equivalences are negotiated and crafted. I wanted to engage with the spatial practices through which equivalences are crafted and to situate the key events of the ICC in the context of the ongoing and contested organisation of this ambitious project.

Being part of a project defined by spatially stretched and multiple trajectories of resistance was a challenge for the conduct of the research. It was not possible or desirable to seek a position outside of these multiple networks. Rather, taking on Latour’s argument that even long networks remain local at all points, it was necessary to become part of the ongoing activity of these networks (Latour, 1993: 117-119). The London Welcoming Committee (LWC) was one hub of these networks, active in recombining and negotiating diverse interrelations. It was a very specific site in the activity of the formation of the Caravan, and was constituted through specific interrelations with London-based activist networks. Being part of the committee’s often chaotic and vitriolic meetings enabled engagement with how this particular site of action negotiated and generated differences and tensions. Attending these meetings and taking notes on how key issues were

negotiated enabled a stress on how such quotidian forms of political practice are constitutive of political identities.<sup>89</sup> The tensions that emerged from these discussions are examined in detail in chapter 5.

I also followed the action of some of the key events of the ICC. I was involved with the small part of the Caravan that came to London, between the 26th and 29th May, 1999. This involved demonstrations outside the headquarters of the Nuffield Foundation, a visit to a genetics test site squatted by Genetix activists and a public hearing where activists from the Caravan and UK based activists spoke. I also was part of the action of the Caravan while it was in Cologne to protest at the G7 summit, between June 16th and June 22nd. I found the events in London easier to negotiate, be part of and make a contribution to, than the bigger and more intense events in Cologne. In Cologne there were about five hundred to a thousand activists at the camp beside the Rhine where the Caravan stayed. Being involved prior to the events with the organising action of the London Welcoming Committee meant that I had a stronger handle on the contexts of the action, which I found it harder to pick up in Cologne. These events were short, intense and productive. To engage with the multiplicity of routes of activity that were brought together through these actions and the textures and effects of these interactions was difficult.

One of the strategies I adopted to situate and investigate these events was to examine the histories and geographies of key movements involved in the Caravan, notably the KRRS. I investigated this relational context through drawing on secondary research into the Indian New Farmers' Movements and on commentary in the Indian independent left social science periodical, the *Economic and Political Weekly*. The involvement of the KRRS in the PGA network was central to the form and motivation of the Caravan. The KRRS, a Gandhian influenced farmers movement, established in 1965, is one of the most strongly anti neo-liberal of the New Farmers' Movements (Assadi, 1995a: 218-9). It has a history of some engagement with environmental politics, but became actively involved in the struggle against neo-liberal globalisation through its high profile opposition to the Dunkel Draft of the General Agreement of Tariffs on Trade in 1993.

Through this opposition to Dunkelism, the KRRS came into contact with a wide network of organizations and intellectuals including Dr Vandana Shiva of Third World Network and Dr Suman Sahay of Gene Campaign (Assadi, 1995b: 193). These intellectuals shaped an opposition to Dunkelism which articulated among other issues a strong defence of existing unofficial networks of seed circulation and modification. These unofficial practices of generation and circulation of seeds were mobilised against the proposals for Trade in Intellectual Property Rights that were a central part of the Dunkel

Draft. The Dunkel Draft included proposals to confer 'property rights upon the original providers of the seeds (usually foreign companies)' which would also apply to 'subsequent generations grown from the originals' (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 45-46 n15). These proposals were part of a refinement of patenting which stipulated that plant varieties must be protectable either by patents or by a *sui generis* system (WTO, 1999).

The opposition to the Dunkel Draft drew attention to the systematically unequal relations of power being produced through the patenting of seeds. It situated the proposed practices as a threat to the practices, activities and identities of Indian farmers (Sahai, 1993: 1180-1, see also Sahai, 2000). It is not just changes in the ownership of the seeds that is made an issue through the politics of the KRRS. The KRRS and other activists have contested the ways patenting would constrain the customary rights of farmers to modify seed varieties to local conditions and would constrain unofficial networks through which new varieties of seeds are distributed (Sahai, 1993: 1180-1). The KRRS have been involved in activities oriented at circumventing the effects of patenting seeds through building up seed banks based on mass participation of rural communities.<sup>90</sup>

The KRRS's high profile opposition to the Dunkel Draft attracted international acclaim among activists (Assadi, 1995a: 194). Similar acclaim followed for assaults on the Cargill Seed Factories and Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets. Their 1998 Cremate Monsanto! action when activists burned a crop of genetically modified cotton was widely publicised through e-mail networks. These forms of activity against 'lifeless property' were articulated as a legitimate form of "Gandhian violence" by their charismatic "heretic Gandhian" leader Professor Nanjundaswamy.<sup>91</sup> These acts linked opposition to neo-liberal globalisation, through campaigns against the Dunkel Draft and latterly the WTO which had been formed through the GATT process, with opposition to genetic modification and bio-technological innovations like the 'terminator' gene (Nanjundaswamy, 1999). Through their opposition to neo-liberal globalisation, KRRS have become linked to other counter globalisation struggles, through involvement with the Association for Taxation of Financial Transactions in Order to Aid Citizens (ATTAC), and the networks of People's Global Action (Starr, 2000: 71).

The distinctive histories and geographies of KRRS had effects on the kinds of solidarities that were produced through the conduct of the ICC. As chapter 2 argued, examining the relational context of actions is important for avoiding a voluntaristic account of the formation of equivalences. The opposition of the New Farmer's Movements to the Dunkel Draft has been structured by an 'unambiguously nationalist discourse' (Brass, 1995: 56n41; see also Assadi, 1995a: 221). Nanjundaswamy has argued,

for example, that the Indian government's acceptance of liberalisation has rendered India 'impotent' (cited by *Economic Times* 24th May 1999). This adoption of nationalist discourses is related to the precarious position of the various farmers movements within the power-geometries of rural India. Their explicitly Gandhian political analysis and action plays down internal divisions in the countryside, presenting itself as a 'village movement' (Assadi, 1995a: 218). The KRRS was subject to a split in 1983 over its denial of peasant differentiation (Assadi, 1995a: 216, 224n9). They have reproduced the tendency of Gandhian nationalism to depict mobilisation as an 'integrated will' that had 'overcome the divisive effects of caste, class, gender and regional interests' (Guha, 1997: 102). Despite the New Farmers' Movement's 'limitations in dealing with intra-village equalities, particularly those of caste', Omvedt has argued they remain a powerful force for 'reshaping the developmental path and restructuring Indian society in an equalitarian, libertarian and sustainable direction' (Omvedt, 1995: 159; see also Omvedt 1993).

These very partial stories representing the farmers movements as the integrated will of the Indian countryside were reproduced through the Caravan. A Gujarati speaker, at a rally held by the London Welcoming Committee at Friends Meeting House on May 29th drew enthusiastic applause from UK activists for his claim to speak for the two thirds of excluded rural India. KRRS's insistence that a minimum of 400 Indian activists would form the core of the Caravan also meant that a very particular Indian-nationalist story was the focus of the activity. This tone and style of action made other activists uncomfortable.<sup>92</sup> The nationalistic orientation of the farmers' movements mapped on to the negotiation of other tensions. The equivalences crafted and negotiated through the conduct of the ICC were not formed around a shared, consensual definition of the 'environment', divorced from practices and conduct. There were significant differences in how 'environments' were imagined and articulated. A key tension here was the constitution of some of the Indian farmers' movements' identities in relation to the practices of a productivist agriculture, opposed by other Southern activists and activists from Western Europe.

A French activist writing in the first ICC bulletin expressed anxiety about the possibility of misleading 'Indians about our agricultural model (subsidies and so on), for which they could yearn' (ICC, 1999a). This suggests an attempt to form equivalences based around a common critique of a high-input agricultural sector, funded by subsidies. Many of the Indian Farmers' Movements, however, have mobilised in support of higher fertiliser subsidies and for remunerative prices for their major crops (Omvedt, 1991: 2287-2290; Mukherji, 1999). Some of the speakers at the Bayer action on June 18th

explicitly condemned the prices of Bayer's products such as fertiliser, rather than rejecting these products in favour of 'traditional' agricultural practices, the position taken by speakers from KRRS. Resentment was expressed by Western activists in Cologne at the interest of many of the Indians in western style consumer goods and shopping.<sup>93</sup> Other equivalences, like the engagement formed between Nepali activists and activists from the Anarchist Tea Pot, a cooking collective from Brighton, during the London actions, developed a shared commitment to a thorough going critique of Western-style development (see Do or Die, 1999, 209–215). This engagement was constituted through criticism of what some of the Anarchist collective argued was the commitment of many of the Indian farmers to Western style development.<sup>94</sup>

There were also tensions over the gender relations that structured the Caravan. The highly unequal gender division of the Indian contingent of the caravan reflected the very male nature of participation in the Indian New Farmers movements. These movements are also led by charismatic male Gandhian-style leaders (see Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 46n17; Bentall, 1996). This was an issue which was contested within meetings, including those of the London Welcoming Committee (see chapter 5, below). Harassment of women and of non-Indian participants by Indian activists affected the quotidian conduct of the caravan. These issues became the site of contestation and negotiation at the second meeting of People's Global Action in Bangalore in the aftermath of the Caravan (see PGA, 1999b). This made it clear that the Caravan was not an end result but part of a longer process of organising against neo-liberal globalisation. Some of the terms and identities of a internationalist counter-globalisation politics were contested and negotiated through this process.

The ICC was a fragile attempt to form a counter-globalisation politics through the formation of political friendships and solidarities that were decentralised, rhizomorphic and routed rather than corralled, controlled and dictated by a central, hierarchical organisational structure. These friendships were formed in opposition to common enemies. These enemies were articulated through the meeting up of trans-national trajectories of resistance against the key institutions of neo-liberal globalisation and practices of modifying seeds/ plants which were seen to be highly unequal and environmentally damaging. The activity of the ICC was oriented at making some of these power relations visible and part of a terrain of contestation. The shared collective actions produced powerful intersubjectivities and exchanges along with unsettlings of identities. The alliances also produced significant tensions. But the negotiation of these tensions was productive. The activity of the Caravan began a process of negotiating what would

constitute the grounds of an internationalist form of counter-globalisation politics.

These tensions illustrate a key problematic in these forms of counter-globalisation politics. Is the resistance to globalisation to be constituted through uncritically valorising 'tradition', the local and the nation in opposition to transnational networks? Or is this resistance to be constituted through equivalences between unlike actors struggling against common exposure to unequally constituted power-geometries? These equivalences being envisioned as producing new forms of political identity and activity. Both of these processes were at work in the activity and conduct of the ICC. The next section argues for the importance of adopting entangled research practices through discussing how tensions in the formation of equivalences through the ICC were negotiated through the conduct of the research.

### **3.5 Entangled Research Practices**

The tensions in the conduct of the ICC were significant. They raised important questions about how to negotiate the conduct of the research so that it engaged with them. Tensions over the nationalisms of the Indian activists emerged in many informal conversations I had with some first world activists, with whom I felt comfortable speaking openly about criticisms of the conduct of the ICC. But there were other more structured moments within the research, where tensions came up, where I felt it was important to explore ways of engaging with these tensions in a more explicit way. One of the key moments where this happened was an evaluation meeting of the ICC, held at Kingsley Hall, in London, October 1999.

*The meeting was held shortly after a vehement critique of the Caravan by an activist who had formerly been involved in the London Welcoming Committee had been circulated widely on e-mail networks and published in the Earth First! journal, Do or Die (Do or Die, 1999: 28-29). This had generated considerable anger among those present. This anger was not expressed because activists were uncritically engaged in the ICC. They conceded there were problems with the project, but were angry that the critique lacked any 'positive assessment' of the ICC.<sup>95</sup> The discussion at the evaluation became very much defined against this position of absolute rejection of the Caravan. This opened up possibilities for asking some different kinds of questions about the conduct of the Caravan and discussing how these tensions might be negotiated. It opened up questions about what was 'meant by solidarity' and how practices of solidarity had been negotiated through the conduct of the ICC.*

I used the way these themes were emerging as an opportunity to discuss my concerns



about how some of the political identities mobilised through the project adopted a quite closed nationalism. I argued that this had had negative effects on the kinds of solidarities formed through the project. This concern was informed by my engagement with radical democracy. It was an engagement I made hesitantly. I did not want to be seen as just 'dissing' the project and I made it explicit I felt there had been some very positive aspects to the project too. It also was an active intervention, which some of the activists might not have expected me to make. Some older activists in earlier meetings had equated my position as an academic with a position of passivity. In response to this I emphasised that I wanted to be actively involved in the conduct of the ICC, rather than just a passive observer.<sup>96</sup>

This concern with the kinds of solidarities that were produced through the ICC was taken in different directions. Different activists stated very different positions on what grounds alliances should be formed. Some argued that the only key criterion should be non violence. Others argued that alliances with right wing groups might be a possible strategic move. This was a position that many were uncomfortable with, arguing that alliances should only be formed with broadly left groups. This intervention brought to the fore some interesting and contested questions about the kinds of solidarities being produced through the ICC. It was important in terms of the conduct of the research as it made some of these tensions explicit. Being mute in this context, through not offering up a position about the ICC, would have been a less effective research strategy because it would have meant that these tensions remained relatively undiscussed. A condition of this engagement was that I articulated a position, rather than pretending I was a neutral observer, who didn't have passionately held views about the conduct of the ICC.

This was a productive part of the engagement with the conduct of the ICC. Practical-moral knowledges and theoretical positions are not constitutively separate from action, but are part of activity and renegotiated through activity (Shotter, 1993: 107-8). Theoretical perspectives can be useful for probing and questioning certain tensions as they emerge through activity. Thus a concern with what kind of political identities are formed through activity very much informed my engagement with the Caravan. But this engagement suggests that activity can also threaten and unsettle theory. These tensions in the conduct of the Caravan suggest the importance of forming practices which might reconfigure anti-globalisation identities in an open and plural, rather than a closed way. This suggests the importance of engaging with what kind of spatial practices might produce and be produced through the formation of durable solidarities and equivalences.

These are questions which are largely evaded by radical democratic theory.

Intervening in and following forms of political activity can be productive, not just because theoretical takes can help frame engagements with situations and activity. Activity can also 'threaten' existing theoretical positions. Here I adopt the term 'entangled research practices' to work with and suggest the multiple and generative character of this process. The rest of this section outlines and develops four elements of 'entangled research practices'. Firstly, these research practices are modest and partial. Secondly, they seek to engage with the emergent character of action, and how such action threatens theory. Thirdly, entangled research practices are not value neutral, but are part of the negotiation and constitution of emergent political identities. Fourthly, these research practices are part of the conduct through which political activity negotiates and produces connections and cross cutting relations of power. These elements develop the implications of the 'entangled ontology of engagement' set out in chapter 2 for the research practices adopted through the thesis.

Entangled research practices are necessarily partial and limited. They are constituted by the impossibility of taking a position which is neatly outside of political activity. This is the position taken by some critical geographers such as Harvey. His critique of the environmental justice movement imposes a critical direction on the movement from outside of the activity and emerging directions of that movement (Harvey, 1996: 400). Entangled research practices are also defined against the idea that political activity can be represented in an unmediated way by intellectuals functioning as relays (for an articulation of such a position, see Foucault and Deleuze, 1977). Through adopting a position of themselves as relays of the political views of others Foucault and Deleuze render their own selves as absent and construct other political actors as having pre-constituted identities. In 'representing them [the masses], the intellectuals represent themselves as transparent' (Spivak, 1988: 275).

Entangled research practices form a partial intervention which is part of the multiplicity of knowledges and activities. This refigures research practice as part of the joint and unfinished productive action brought together through the conduct of political activity. It is through this kind of quotidian intervention that research practices can be reconfigured as part of the process of crafting identities. This is integral to envisioning research as part of radical democratic practices and involves seeing political identities as processes of becoming. Rather than judging emerging political identities against prescriptive 'blueprints' of what action ought to be (for a version of such an approach, see Brecher, Costello and Smith, 2000: 29-31) this suggests the importance of hesitant, situated engagements with the tensions and possibilities that emerge through activity.

This is a version of research practice which is alive to some of the consequences 'which are not intended by any of the participants in an interaction but are a *joint outcome*' (Thrift, 1997: 129, *emphasis in original*). Adopting a critical position outside of such activity tends to refuse the 'hesitancy, incompleteness, and recursive character of world making' (Hinchliffe, 2000b: 577). It is through engaging with aspects of political activity, such as the formation of equivalences, that 'a continuity of engagement' can be formed which 'allows us to know how things are because of what we [and others?] did to bring them about' (Radley, cited by Thrift 1996: 126). The 'stutters and cuts, misfires and stoppages' and 'unintended outcomes' of becoming can usefully be seen as a constitutive part of research practice (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000: 418). Theorising should not take place in ways which eschew the disruptive effects of such unintended outcomes because they challenge the tidy divisions and orderings of academic enquiry. This generative character of activity can productively threaten theory. Theoretical engagement can be more than a codifying of different kinds of political activity, and become part of an ongoing engagement and recursive intervention with activity.

Situating research practices as part of the ongoing negotiation of emergent political identities, suggests that they can not be value neutral. Hammersley's recent work on social research practice has reasserted the importance of 'value neutrality as a constitutive principle of social research' (Hammersley, 1995: back cover; 2000). Hammersley argues that values should be excluded from the conduct of social research, criticising 'critical research' for 'the way it blends fact and value' (Hammersley, 2000: 139). He argues that social research cannot resolve disagreements about judgements, but can only 'provide factual evidence that bears on these judgements and disagreements' (Hammersley, *ibid.*). Hammersley's argument that social researchers cannot assume a privileged expertise as regards 'value conclusions' is important (Hammersley, 2000: 140n32). His assertions about the need to separate 'fact' and 'value', however, rest on a view of 'values' as pre-existing and neatly separate from the conduct of activity and the formation of identities.

A very different view of the research process emerges through theorising values and identities as negotiated and re-negotiated through activity. Shotter has argued that 'practical-moral knowledges' are re-constituted through activity (Shotter, 1993: 107-8). This implies that values cannot be purified from the conduct of activity, whether this be the formation of political activity, or the conduct or writing of research. Responding to Hammersley through arguing that values should be made explicit is inadequate. For values cannot be as easily purified from the research process as this suggests. Rather what might be more productive is situating entangled research practices as part of ongoing

engagements with the formation and negotiation of particular practical-moral knowledges. I experimented with something approximating this position in the conduct of the research into the ICC through being part of the ongoing formation of equivalences between unlike actors.

Being part of the formation of equivalences also involves negotiating a position in multiple cross-cutting relations of power. This is why engagements with spatial relations are a constitutive part of entangled practices of research. There is a long, and epistemically violent history of collapsing the activity of marginalised groups into 'nature' through mobilising particular forms of spatial imagination and metaphor. Violent, pathologising, and naturalising imagery is a recurrent feature of contemporary writing about the Whiteboys. The sectarian pamphleteer Dominick Trant dramatised the terror of the Whiteboys through comparing them to 'the Typho[o]n in the Indian seas', describing the movement of their activity as 'the growth of the contagion' (Trant, 1787: 49, 55-6). Donnelly also characterised the movement of Whiteboy activity as happening through processes of 'contagion' (Donnelly, 1978: 23). These spatial metaphors of counter-insurgency have effects and legacies.<sup>97</sup> They are frequently employed in contemporary accounts of resistance: a recent report commissioned by the US military into the Zapatista uprising characterised the insurgency of the EZLN as "'a war of the swarm" [...] ubiquitous and impossible to contain' (cited by Klein, 2000b).

Entangled practices of research demand a rejection of such counter-insurgent spatial imaginations of resistance. But reintroducing the agency of subaltern groups cannot proceed by arguing that they have fully formed identities before their engagement with geographies of power. Rather it is essential to follow how activity negotiates location in multiple interconnections, and is constituted through positive and negative relations with diverse interconnections. Thus the research into the Inter-Continental Caravan was attentive to how wider geographies of power were imagined and how these imaginations had effects on the kinds of political activity and identity produced through the action. Similar concerns were developed in the research into Gargoyle Wharf, through tracing some of the imaginations of geographies of power of the diverse groups who mobilised around the site.

This position is also important for the conduct of the historical research. How geographies of power are imagined and negotiated through the conduct of movements like the Whiteboys is important for examining their political identities. Examining their negotiation of cross-cutting relations of power is one way of engaging with the kinds of political identities crafted through Whiteboy activity. Locating such acts as the products

of multiple interrelations begins to problematise the idea that anti-enclosure struggles were bounded. This enables investigation of movements like the Whiteboys to be imagined in ways which problematise some of the edenic narratives used to structure and legitimise contemporary green thought and action.

### **3.6 Conclusions**

This chapter has outlined the activity of the three movements that form the empirical basis of this thesis. It has introduced some of the ways different ‘environmentalisms of the poor’ construct agency through contesting unequal social and environmental relations. It has situated these diverse movements as constituted from multiple routes of activity and has illustrated that they are defined by the ways they recombine these routes of activity in distinctive ways. This focus on the productiveness of activity has implications for the conduct of research. It necessitates following activity and engaging with how interrelations are negotiated rather than adopting a supposedly dispassionate stance outside of activity. This involves forming an engagement with tensions and possibilities that emerge and are generated through action.

At key moments in the research process I tried to engage with and make explicit some of the tensions of the conduct of the GWCAG and ICC, both as a way of engaging with the tensions, and also as part of researching how they were being dealt with. This is an active process. To make explicit these tensions is a hesitant process which can have unintended outcomes. But it can begin to make at least some of the research process a joint activity rather than one structured by fixed divisions. This approach has also been applied in different ways to the historical work, to try and engage with how documents like threatening letters are not frozen relics, but need to be thought of as strategies which were negotiating and intervening in specific, relational contexts.

The activity of these different ‘environmentalisms of the poor’ constructs agency through negotiating their positions within multiple routes of activity and power relations. The histories and geographies of these ‘environmentalisms of the poor’ problematise some of the edenic narratives used by green activists and theorists to structure their political imaginations. Locating movements within cross-cutting relations of power perhaps makes it more difficult to construct accounts which ‘celebrate’ an authentic experience of resistance. But it opens up other possibilities. Examining how political activity has negotiated diverse interrelations opens up possibilities for exploring different ways in which political actors have constructed agency. It can explore how their political activity has exerted pressure on the relations of power instituted by dominant groups, but

also how the activity has negotiated the formation of equivalences. These themes are developed in chapter 4.

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<sup>1</sup> Linebaugh and Rediker, 1991: 26.

<sup>2</sup> The formation of a food riot tradition in Munster in the first part of the eighteenth century occurred in towns like Cork and Carrick-on-Suir which were hubs of diverse connections with England, various parts of Ireland and beyond (Fitzgerald, 1996: 115-122). The Houghers movement in Galway in the early eighteenth century mobilised around customary rights and against the commercialisation of milk (Connolly, 1987: 152-3). Barnard has argued that the Houghers and other forms of 'traditional' popular culture and politics such as 'rough music' emerged in Ireland at the intersection of 'imports and indigenous inventions' (Barnard, 1993: 74-5).

<sup>3</sup> Oliver's enclosures of the townland commons of Kilmallock was the site of one of the first outbreaks of Whiteboy activity, see Burke, c.1762 and Donnelly 1978: 21-2. For Hackett's enclosure of Fethard common, see below chapter 6.

<sup>4</sup> John Butler converted to protestantism in 1739 (Power, 1993: 112). Conversion was one of the strategies the underground gentry used to circumvent the penal laws against Catholics.

<sup>5</sup> Taaffe, 1767: 19. A 'well born Tipperary Catholic' noted judiciously that they were 'the scum and some of the rabble of three or four baronies', cited by Donnelly, 1978: 38. These subaltern groups were part of wider power relations and in some instances Whiteboys were directly mobilised by local gentry. Early in 1762 William Fant, a protestant attorney, 'assembled at night many of the meaner people of Kilmallock and [...] telling them that their Town common had been illegally enclosed [and] they had a right by law to level the walls' (Burke, c. 1762).

<sup>6</sup> O'Connor to John Curry [May 14, 1762], Historical Manuscript Commission, 1881: 470a. See also Crawford, 1783, cited by Lewis, 1836: 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> NLI, Ms 11051 value of Kilcass tithes, folio 16-23. Before enclosure 23 tenants made tithe payments in Kilcass. The four tenants who remained each paid between £4 and £6. Of the 19 ejected tenants 15 were listed as not paying over £1, which following Power (1993: 167) suggests that in this part of the Kilcass estate at least, enclosure had a dramatic effect in displacing those who were already poor.

<sup>8</sup> Britain's imperial war economy needed provisions in the Seven years war with France and there had been bad domestic harvests in 1758. There were 'three long pandemics' of rinderpest in eighteenth-century Europe, 'covering the years 1709-2, 1742-60 and 1786-86', all of which affected England (Bush, 1983: 104). Farmers did not take account of the agency of the disease: 'they cannot comprehend .... that these infectious particles' 'can adhere to their clothes' (de Monchy, 1770: 26-7)

<sup>9</sup> The Cattle Acts introduced in the late seventeenth century, and made permanent in 1680, prevented importation of Irish cattle and other provisions into England (O'Donovan, 1940: 60). This strengthened connections with France and Spain, and French colonies, through a re-orientation of the export trade.

<sup>10</sup> In 1756 average annual export of live cattle was 29 but by 1760 this had risen to 1,029 and by 1764 to 2,344 (O'Donovan, 1940: 111).

<sup>11</sup> The 'heads and kidneys' were still being sold to the poor suggesting they had 'customary rights' to these materials at fair or low prices (Willes, [1760], 1990: 49).

<sup>12</sup> Amos Griffiths, the 'late surveyor of Belfast and formerly Inspector General of Munster' responding to the vehemently sectarian anti Whiteboy pamphlet of Trant (1788) wrote that 'land situated near commonage sets dearer on that account -and the poor people who had taken such land on being deprived of the [rights] which induced them to take it, naturally felt so glaring a violation of justice as a grievance, and having had some nocturnal meetings they levelled the fences -and I highly applaud them for their spirit in so doing' (Griffiths, 1788: 240-1). Much has been written about Sheehy who was the subject of a judicial murder by the Tipperary gentry, see Burke, 1907: 461-505.

<sup>13</sup> For articulations of the moral economy with intense disciplinary scrutiny of tenants, see Whelan, 1996: 16.

<sup>14</sup> Their action is frequently described as audacious, for examples see Faulkner's Dublin Journal (FDJ) 23-27th March, 1762; Gentleman's Magazine, April 1762; A Short Narrative, 1762: 22.

<sup>15</sup> Whelan, 1996: 93.

<sup>16</sup> Townshend Mss, MS 6806/41/7/6-1; A Short Narrative, 1762: 22.

<sup>17</sup> A Short Narrative, 1762: 23.

<sup>18</sup> Gentleman's Magazine, April 1762.

<sup>19</sup> Papers of King George III, 1929: 310-311.

<sup>20</sup> Curry, 1766: 7.

<sup>21</sup> FDJ, July 3rd -July 6th 1762.

<sup>22</sup> Gentleman's Magazine, April 1762.

<sup>23</sup> FDJ 25th -29th May 1762.

<sup>24</sup> These figures draw on *Gentlemen's Magazine*, April, 1762; *A Short Narrative*, 1762; FDJ March 23-27th 1762, April 6-10 1762, May 1st-May 4th 1762, May 4th-8th, 1762 3rd-6th July, FDJ March 5th-8th 1763; March 12th-15th 1763; 26th-29th March, 1763; 29th March-April 2nd 1763; 24th-8th September 1765; 1st-5th October, 1765, FDJ March 8th-12th, 1763. For activity in Kilkenny see FDJ April 6<sup>th</sup>-9th, 1765; 9<sup>th</sup>-13th April 1765; September 29th-October 2nd 1765. They also draw on the table of Whiteboy activity in Bric, 1985: 170-176.

<sup>25</sup> Contemporary descriptions of mumming highlight the similarities between the guises of mumming and the appearance of the Whiteboys. Common to both were White shirts, female clothes and masks. On Mummers in Carlow, see Folklore Commission notebook 407: 18, and on Christmas mummers in mid eighteenth century Wexford, see Whelan 1996: 23. For a description of the Whiteboys which emphasises these continuities, see Townshend Mss, MS 6806/41/7/6-1.

<sup>26</sup> Whelan, 1996:23.

<sup>27</sup> Women's participation in agrarian resistance is poorly documented (Lloyd, 1997). Shaw notes that about four percent of the 9,000 Irish women transported to Australia between 1815 and 1853 were transported for arson, a crime associated with agrarian agitation (Shaw, 1966: 183). Though I have not found reports of women being actively involved in the Whiteboy movement in the 1760s, women were active in crowd events in support of the Whiteboys such as the celebration of the leniency of Chief Justice Ashton in the Clonmel assizes of June 1762 (Donnelly, 1978: 46). The movement as a whole tends to support Roach's argument that in male bound rituals women become 'symbolically central' (Roach, 1996: 267).

<sup>28</sup> There are continuities in these forms of otherworldly guises: activists at the road protest at Pollok Free State in Glasgow would go on nocturnal 'pixie' missions to sabotage road building machinery.

<sup>29</sup> This was an officially sanctioned grievance. Opposition to the erosion of tillage was a feature of many pamphlets in the eighteenth century, see Triptolemus, 1741, Publicola, 1741a, 1741b. An act passed in 1727 to ensure that out of every 100 acres not less than 5 should be under cultivation was never implemented, 1 Geo., II c. 10, see also Lecky, 1892: 2n3.

<sup>30</sup> The Ulster custom of tenant right was 'a practice by which rural tenants claimed property rights above and beyond their contracts with landlords' (Dowling, 1990: 3).

<sup>31</sup> An annotated collection of the full texts of the Whiteboy threatening letters from the 1760s and 1770s which I have drawn on in this study is available from the author. Most are from secondary sources, though some are from contemporary newspapers. The writings of the Victorian historians Lecky and Froude are key sources in this respect. They reproduced material from archives in the Public Record Office in Dublin Castle which were destroyed by fire in 1922. They seem, however, to have tended to reproduce only the most eloquent or most unusual of these letters.

<sup>32</sup> Unofficial knowledges are still given marginal status even in 'critical' versions of geography. See, for example, Cresswell's discussion of the struggles over Stonehenge which makes no explicit reference to the voluminous alternative medias about Stonehenge, one of the most famous examples being the Levellers' song 'The Battle of the Beanfield' (Cresswell, 1996: 62-96).

<sup>33</sup> On this collection and on the Folklore Commission, see O'Cathain, 1991. It is a testament to the power of Irish revisionist historiography, and its occlusion of unofficial knowledges through its focus on 'the sites and narratives of state formation' that the use of the folklore archive is still a source of profound ambiguity (Lloyd, 1997: 268). Toibin, for example, argues that 'at best the record is vivid and compelling', but goes on to argue that because folklore is 'often-consciously or subconsciously-selective, evasive and apologetic' it can 'be anything you want it to be' (Toibin, 1999: 2). There are exclusions in this record however. The folklore collectors: they systematically ignored Irish Travellers (McLaughlin, 1995: 37). I was not able to use the material on the Whiteboys held in this archive which is solely in Irish.

<sup>34</sup> SP 63/421/75.

<sup>35</sup> Trant, 1787: 37; FDJ May 4th -7<sup>th</sup>, 1765.

<sup>36</sup> Two tythe proctors horses 'were lately cropped in Clonmel, one ear from each horse, and last week a poor man's horse at Castlegrace nr Clogheen had both his ears cut off close to the skull' FDJ, 1<sup>st</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> October, 1765.

<sup>37</sup> For examples of views of commons which limit the sense of its uses to land for potatoes and for livestock, see Whelan, 1996: 25-6; Power, 1994: 166; Donnelly, 1978: 32-33.

<sup>38</sup> An inhabitant of Connaberry noted that 'Rushes [were] in common use when my father was a boy' and that '[i]t was one of his tasks to procure rushes from the bog many times per week' University College Dublin Folklore Commission Notebook 406: 26 -27. On the uses of rushes, see Neeson, 1993: 167-8, Davidson, 1982: 103-6.

<sup>39</sup> On the uses of stinging nettles, see Mabey, 1972: 100-1.

<sup>40</sup> There was a wider assault on customary rights to wood. The Irish Society 'decided in 1720 that the timber allowance to tenants did not even include the lop and top of timber felled by the Society' (Neeson, 1991: 63).

<sup>41</sup> See chapter 6 below.

<sup>42</sup> Dennis Connor, a Tallow wool comber and 'adjutant amongst the Whiteboys' was conveyed under heavy military guard to Dublin in March 1762. Andrew Moore, a tiler, and Pierce Bailey, a mason, of Glanworth were condemned to death in 1762, FDJ 3-6, 6-10, 10-13 April 1762, 12-15 June 1762. Young argued that Mitchelstown was a hub of Whiteboy activity (Young, 1892, vol. 1: 462-3).

<sup>43</sup> Fitzgerald, 1996: 115-122, Kelly, 1991: 87, 88; Thompson, 1991: 293; Dickson, 1997: 55-6; Garnham 1996: 200. There was a similar geography of food riots in the famine of 1799-1801, see Wells, 1996: 182.

<sup>44</sup> 29 George II c.12 1755.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> On the interracial musical exchanges that produced shanteys, see Bolster, 1997: 215, 217.

<sup>47</sup> The port of Waterford and the surrounding area, a key area of Whiteboy activity, was bound into seasonal migration of men to work in the fisheries of Newfoundland (Young, 1892, vol. I: 406; Byrne, 1992).

<sup>48</sup> Whiteboys hunted by the authorities 'commonly sought permanent refuge in Newfoundland' (Donnelly, 1983: 315). See also Belfast Newsletter 30 July 1762 and Byrne, 1992: 363-364.

<sup>49</sup> For references to the Whiteboys made Langman and other Society for the Propagation of the Gospel missionaries in Newfoundland, see S.P.G. Ms B6/167/173/ 174/176.

<sup>50</sup> Langman, St Johns November 8th 1766, S.P.G. Ms B6 167.

<sup>51</sup> There was concern about 'sabbath breaking by music and dancing' S.P.G. Ms B6/176 29th October 1769. Lawrence Coughlan, an Irish speaking missionary, noted that the 'common fishermen, English and Irish, mar[r]ly and baptise' themselves, S.P.G., Ms B6/179. The authorities in Newfoundland tried to regulate these patterns of mobility, see PRO/CO 194/ 17: 11.

<sup>52</sup> S.P.G., Ms B6 172 November 5th 1767 Trinity.

<sup>53</sup> Public Advertiser, 21st July 1768.

<sup>54</sup> PRO/ TS 11 2696 Box 818.

<sup>55</sup> See for example Triptolemus's argument that Munster should be repopulated with Protestants due to their greater industriousness, Triptolemus, 1741: 35. On the transplantations see Prendergast, [1865] 1996.

<sup>56</sup> The phrase 'grind the face of the poor' is taken from a threatening letter, cited by Froude, 1881: 25.

<sup>57</sup> Painter, 1991: 98.

<sup>58</sup> This usage of rhythms draws on Lefebvre's account of rhythmanalysis to animate relations of power in cities, see Lefebvre, 1996: 219-227.

<sup>59</sup> McLeish (1996: 38) has made this argument about the eviction of Claremont Road.

<sup>60</sup> In an Interview with Bruce MacKenzie of Gargoyle Wharf Action Group he described the occupation as having a catalysing effect. Interview at Bruce Mackenzie's room in Tooting Bec, May 20th 1999, TLIO/ Interview/1-20/5/1999.

<sup>61</sup> These notes are available from the author and are listed in appendix 1.

<sup>62</sup> This engagement has been less active in the final two years of the PhD.

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.oneworld.org/tlio/campaigns/wandsworth/happen.html>, accessed May 28, 2001.

<sup>64</sup> On the techniques of the long interview, see McCracken, 1988.

<sup>65</sup> One No M11 Link protester argued 'At Twyford [Down] they weren't really connecting it. It was nice fluffy landscapes and not about houses and people and communities. The M11 has made roads into the issue it should have been' (cited by Grant, 1996: 22).

<sup>66</sup> On the protest against the M77 see Routledge, 1996. For a discussion of some of the diverse trajectories of political involvement that coalesced at the M11 protest, see Hunt and Massey, 1996.

<sup>67</sup> There were numerous connections and histories of those participating in the occupation. These included involvement in the free festival movements, new age and traveller sites, the Green Party, the Green Student Network, volunteers from the New Economics Foundations, and various road protests. There were also anarchists associated with the journal Freedom and ex Committee of 100 members etc.

<sup>68</sup> Diggers 350, an off shoot of the Land is Ours staged an occupation of St George's Hill, one of the colonies the Diggers had squatted at the end of the English Revolution. There were pronounced tensions over some of the English cultural nationalism being used to underpin this event at a large planning meeting about this action, TLIO/Discussions/5-15/1/99

<sup>69</sup> For a discussion of this movement see Hinton, 1988.

<sup>70</sup> The Rainbow Centre was a squatted centre in Kentish Town.

<sup>71</sup> This description of squatting comes from Do or Die, 1999: 135.

<sup>72</sup> This alternative circulated through wider and transnational activists networks, see Hunt, 1997, and through workshops. Tony Gosling and I gave workshops about the occupation at the Zurich meeting of the International Network of Urban Research and Action, in July, 1997, and in a squat in Amsterdam being used as a base for activists protesting at the 1997 EU summit.

<sup>73</sup> On permaculture see <http://www.permaculture.co.uk/>.

<sup>74</sup> TLIO/Discussions/2-15/10/1996.

<sup>75</sup> For these submissions see Whitebread, 1996.



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<sup>76</sup> This position was negotiated at a TLIO national gathering in April, 1999.

<sup>77</sup> TLIO/ Interview/1-20/5/1999.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> For a critique of the tendency of urban political interventions to situate themselves within rather than in antagonistic relation with the contours of capitalist urbanisation see Kipfer et al., 1996: 13-14.

<sup>80</sup> Slogan on ICC leaflet.

<sup>81</sup> Discussion with an activist from radical group on Bayer work's council, ICC/Discussions/19-20/6/1999.

<sup>82</sup> 'Demonstration in the wrong place'.

<sup>83</sup> It was marked by the 'Carnival Against Capital' in the City of London, a march of 50,000 landless peasants in Brasilia, a 10,000 strong Carnival of the Oppressed shutting down Port Harcourt in Nigeria in protest against the oil companies exploitation of the Niger Delta and by 200, 000 on the streets of Hyderabad. (Do or Die, 1999: 35; Klein, 2000a: 444).

<sup>84</sup> See Lynas, 1999. ICC/Discussions/11-29/5/1999.

<sup>85</sup> Neo-liberalism was not at that time a term in everyday usage in movements like the UK anti-roads movement.

<sup>86</sup> For an account of and documents relating to the second meeting, see De Angelis, 1998.

<sup>87</sup> Information from the three ICC newsletters, Do or Die, 1999 and from own participation.

<sup>88</sup> The Schengen agreement covers France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece. For critical histories and discussion of the Schengen agreement and its role in the formation of 'Fortress Europe' see, <http://www.statewatch.org/>.

<sup>89</sup> Notes on these meetings and the ICC events I attended are available from the author and are listed in appendix 1.

<sup>90</sup> ICC/Discussions/19-20/6/1999 and see Assadi, 1995a: 201.

<sup>91</sup> This description was used by Nanjundaswamy in an interview with Vidal, 1999: 16. On the KRRS's theory of "Gandhian violence", see Assadi, 1995a: 202.

<sup>92</sup> ICC/Discussions/19-20/6/1999.

<sup>93</sup> ICC/Discussions/13-17/6/1999.

<sup>94</sup> ICC/Discussions/8-27/5/1999, see also Do or Die, 1999: 3.

<sup>95</sup> Discussions/ICC/20-27/10/1999.

<sup>96</sup> ICC/Discussions/3-8/4/1999. What Spivak describes as a 'killing opposition between the text narrowly conceived of as the verbal text and activism narrowly conceived as some sort of mindless engagement' has legitimacy among some activists just as it does among some academics (Spivak, 1990: 120).

<sup>97</sup> For a discussion of how counter-insurgent narratives have erased the agency of subaltern groups, see Guha, 1983b.

## Chapter 4:

### Cross-cutting Relations of Power and Agency

#### 4.1 Introduction

At the end of his book celebrating the way that the Luddites opposed not machinery in itself but only machinery that was ‘hurtful to commonality’, Kirkpatrick Sale begins to draw lessons from the Luddites’ politics. His work illustrates the shifting and nuanced tones of the Luddites’ engagements with new technologies. It demonstrates that they evaluated new technologies through scrutinising the power relations they were part of. He articulates his investigation of their ideas and practice, however, not to a questioning of the power relations that new technologies are embedded in, but to a celebration of pre-industrial communities. He uses his discussion of the Luddites to argue for a rehabilitation of ‘the tribal mode of existence’. Sale argues this mode of existence is ‘consonant with the true underlying needs of the human creature’ because it is ‘nature-based’ (Sale, 1995: 275). Sale underpins this vision with a stress on the local and autonomous character of these tribal modes of existence and constructs the communities that make up such a mode of existence as stable and communal. He uses this invocation of bounded, traditional communities to develop political ‘strategies of localism’ which rather than connecting different skeins of activity are defined against wider practices of globalism.

In reifying the primitive and the local in an essentialist and romantic way, Sale dispenses with the critical tools that could be garnered from his wonderful invocation of Luddism. These critical tools might include the Luddites’ contestations and evaluations of new technologies and the mobility of their amorphous organisational forms. In dispensing with such tools he threatens to make radical environmental politics a politics against *any kind of future* rather than one with a horizon which actively engages with emergent histories and geographies. This uncritical reification of the local and of tradition is a common trope in radical green thought and criticism. A leader in the *Ecologist* responded to the 2000 May Day demonstration in London by condemning the participants for being ‘against community, family [and] tradition of any sort.’ It argued that these were the only possible alternatives ‘to central planning and bureaucratic dominance’ and are ‘essential ingredients for a healthy society’ (Goldsmith, 2000: 3). The UK Earth First! movement dreams of creating societies that will ‘be like ecosystems [...] diversified, balanced and harmonious’ (Do or Die, 2000: 3).

There are different ways of articulating these strategies of localism. Earth First! have adopted some of the strategies that Goldsmith’s leader was explicitly writing against. But

there are continuities in the way these diverse political imaginations oppose neo-liberal globalisation with alternatives of bounded, traditional communities in 'harmony with nature'. Such politics adopt a spatial imagination which downplays the role of connections in constituting place-located political identities and does much to close down the possibility of an internationalist opposition to neo-liberal globalisation. This kind of politics suggests there is no need for political innovation or the formation of new political identities. For it appeals to forms of 'tradition' which already have all the answers.<sup>1</sup> This tendency to articulate resistance as local and autonomous has commonalities with some of the common-sense spatial imaginations used to theorise resistance. Oppositional action and the activity of marginalised groups has been theorised as bounded and autonomous by writers as diverse as Ranajit Guha, Michel de Certeau, Hakim Bey and Georg Simmel.<sup>2</sup> Starn in an incisive discussion of the extra-legal forms of justice of Peruvian peasant communities, however, has argued that peasant politics although it is 'distinctive', is 'never autonomous' (Starn, 1992: 94). Moore's reading of Gramsci's account of subaltern politics emphasises Gramsci's argument that subaltern groups are not autonomous but are 'always subject to the activity of ruling groups even when they rise up' (Moore, 1998: 353, Gramsci, 1971: 55). Rejecting a focus on subaltern autonomy has resources for producing a 'relational and dynamic notion' of subalternity engaged with cross cutting relations of power (Moore, *ibid*, see also Pile, 1997: 18). By 'cross-cutting relations of power' Moore refers to the way particular activities take place within and in turn alter webs of spatially constructed power relations.

Locating subaltern activity within cross-cutting relations of power can help recover the agency of subaltern groups. It allows the multiple ways that such action 'exerts pressure and sets limits' on the spatial formations and practices of dominant groups to emerge. It can highlight how subaltern forms of political identity are constituted through the ways they negotiate spatially stretched relations of power. This formulation can be helpful in producing accounts of the 'entangled political identities' that were described in chapter 2. A stress on the formation of such 'entangled political identities' necessitates that they are theorised in terms of how they contest and negotiate the 'material and social orderings' performed through different cross-cutting relations of power. John Law has argued that we should explore how 'ordering attempts [...] are performed, embodied and told in different materials' (Law, 1994: 95). This chapter explores how the 'entangled political identities' of different 'environmentalisms of the poor' are performed through contesting and constructing as antagonisms practices which perform, generate and embody materials in unequally constituted ways. It explores how different oppositional

political movements have constructed their agency through contesting and negotiating the unequal performance of particular 'material and social orderings'.

Two important possibilities are opened up by rejecting bounded conceptualisations of political activity. Firstly, dislocating the pervasive tendency to construct bounded, communal and local resistances as the privileged alternative to neo-liberal globalisation can help envision how place located identities can be constituted through positive relations with other struggles. This is not a rejection of local political activity, but an argument that it can be conducted in ways that make alliances with other struggles more possible. Unsettling place based politics in this way helps us to imagine how the formation of equivalences can involve the reconstitution of militant place-located political identities. Secondly, locating political activity as part of multiple relations of power helps tell stories about how different 'environmentalisms of the poor' construct their agency and identities. It can help to bring to the fore how agency is constructed through contesting unequal 'material and social orderings'. This develops and engages with Haraway's argument that political constituencies are formed through articulations between unlike actors combined in unequal ways (Haraway, 1992: 323-4).

#### **4.2 Place and the ambiguities of participation**

Chapter 2 argued that international reports such as the Brundtland Commission have invoked 'techniques of participation' as forms of consensual, a-political activity. It argued that these imaginations of participation tend to produce versions of 'local' communities isolated from wider power relations and not riven by significant inequalities or differences. Since the writing of the Brundtland Report and the Agenda 21 section of the Earth Summit, techniques of participation have been advocated and celebrated by diverse contemporary political actors. These range from radical think-tanks like the *New Economics Foundation*, through national conservation bodies to major global institutions such as the World Bank. New Labour has advocated participation as a tool to negotiate diverse issues such as crime and social exclusion (New Economics Foundation, 1998, Goodwin, 1999, Gardner and Yarwood, 2000: 409, Social Exclusion Unit, 2000).

Discourses of participation have helped shift debates away from the use of the tools of free market economics to resolve environmental problems. The influential accounts of economists like David Pearce have argued that 'the intensity of preference for the environment' can be 'measured' by people's willingness to commit 'money-votes' to support these preferences' (Pearce, Markandya and Barbier, 1989: 55). Such an approach to environmental politics has threatened to institutionalise inequalities, different social

groups having vastly differing amounts of money votes, and to produce an extremely reductive sense of how social relations with 'environments' are constructed and mediated. In contrast, techniques of participation have attempted to integrate a diverse and polyphonic set of experiences around places and social and environmental relations into decision making. This can allow the representation of the dense textures of how spaces are valued and experienced (Burgess, Limb, and Harrison, 1988, Goodwin, 1999).

There is, however, a tendency to uncritically celebrate techniques of participation. Cochrane argues participation is in 'itself seen to be a good thing' which encourages the 'empowerment of those [...] previously [...] defined as passive recipients of initiatives developed by experts' (Cochrane, 1996: 205). Uncritical celebration of techniques of participation can obscure significant tensions in their structure and use. These are tensions which go beyond the occasional blatant abuse of such techniques.<sup>3</sup> Here I want to relate these tensions to the way participation techniques perform and invoke bounded, local places. Through promoting ideals of bounded, quite harmonious 'neighbourhoods' participation techniques can produce homogeneous versions of 'local people' isolated from the wider interconnections and power relations constituting places (e.g. New Economics Foundation, 1998, Gibson, 1996, Mayo, Gibson, Thake, 1997: 2, 13). These techniques tend to reproduce the assumption implicit in much liberal thinking that if 'reasonable people sit down and discuss their differences, they will be able to find a solution which suits them all' (Law, 1994: 98). This results in a version of politics which subordinates tensions to the formation of 'shared endeavour', or a 'common good', and where there is an elision between neighbourhood and consensus.

This section discusses one use of a participation technique, a *Planning for Real* event convened by the Gargoyle Wharf Community Action Group (GWCAG). 'Planning for Real' is a technique pioneered by the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation to encourage and facilitate participation in local politics and planning. Its aim is a 'democratisation of the process of planning'. It seeks to draw on the 'active, productive role of people' to create 'a greater sense of shared endeavour' (Worpole and Greenhalgh, 1999: 21). In June 1997 GWCAG, in association with the charity Planning Aid for London (PAL), convened a *Planning for Real* consultation about the future of the Gargoyle Wharf site. PAL provided a team of volunteers to help run the event and the services of an unpaid consultant to co-ordinate and write up the consultation. This was crucial as GWCAG lacked the resources to pay outside consultants, indicative of the unequal access to planning practices and expertise. GWCAG saw the consultation as an exciting and innovative way of contributing to the debate about the site. It was used as an opportunity

to contest the proposed future of the site while simultaneously developing some distinctive positive proposals of their own.<sup>4</sup>

GWCAAG activists knew of Planning for Real techniques through the informal networks of association and ideas generated through the land occupation. As chapter 3 outlined, the contestation of the procedural injustices of official planning processes was a central engagement of the land occupation. GWCAAG activists were attracted by the informal character of Planning for Real. It contrasted with the exclusionary conduct of official planning processes which they had experienced through their participation in the Public Inquiry about the site (see Knight, 1997: 8). The Planning for Real convened by GWCAAG was held in the local Joseph Tritton primary school. This helped to create an informal environment. Children from the school were involved in making the 'Planning for Real' model, a 3D model of the site on which 133 different cards, such as 'tree' and 'workshop', in eight categories including employment, housing, environment, etc. could be placed. There was also a panel of 'yes/ no/ don't know' questions on which participants could 'stick a dot'. These model-based techniques are designed to support the drawing in of people unfamiliar with consultation processes and are designed so that they can be used without a high level of confidence or skills such as literacy. The consultation attracted 155 people, including many children, across three main sessions arranged at different times to appeal to different groups of people. For example there was a morning session designed to catch parents/ carers using a play group. The consultation also included some outreach work at a sheltered housing project for the elderly (PAL, 1997).

Parallel to the 'planning for real' model was an exhibition about the history of the site drawn up by GWCAAG which celebrated the land occupation. It also had displays on other 'alternative' projects in London like the Calthorpe Project on Gray's Inn Road. This situated the event within some of the oppositional discourses around the use of urban land that had been circulated through the land occupation. It produced a presence of alternative views about the site and was part of an attempt of the Land is Ours and GWCAAG to emphasise that people could shape how urban land was used. The land occupation and the prior activity of GWCAAG had put the active social polarisation of the Wandsworth area at the forefront of their campaigns. The consultation adopted a more ambiguous relation to this social polarisation. Bruce Mackenzie argued the event was successful in drawing in a diverse range of people, 'including people who would not have usually looked at a planning event'. It was also unusual in that it attracted 'almost as much participation of residents of the Riverside Plaza [new gentrified waterfront housing] as of the housing estates south of York Road' (PAL, 1997, section 7). The participation of a diverse

constituency of the community around the site unsettled some of the claims made through the report about the event which assumed the existence of a quite homogeneous 'neighbourhood'.

At 11 am on the first Saturday morning of the consultation members of the residents group of Plantation Wharf, one of the luxury housing blocks, presented a *de facto* delegation to the Planning for Real exhibition. Their collective representation to the exhibition on the first day soon after it opened can be interpreted as an attempt to colonise and shape the consultation process. This exceeded the structure of the consultation which assumed that different individuals would put their ideas to the consultation and didn't allow for the challenges of group representation. This suggests that participation techniques can have unintended consequences. Further, groups that are already relatively powerful can reproduce their power and status through the way they negotiate these events. These power relations were also performed through the more mundane personal conduct of people in the exhibition. Some of the people coming in from the areas of social housing on York Road, for example, walked in to the exhibition in a much more tentative way than some of the residents from the luxury flats who performed a comfortable and assured manner through their conduct in the exhibition.<sup>5</sup>

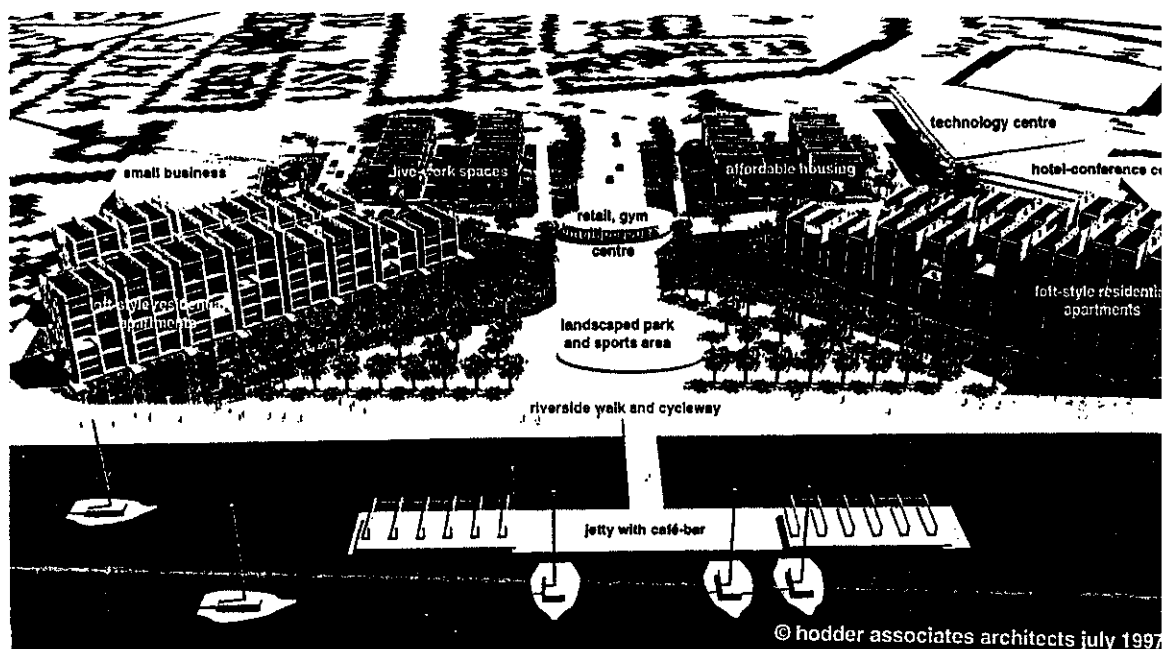
These tensions were not uncontested. There was disquiet among some GWCAG members at the actions of the Plantation Wharf residents group.<sup>6</sup> But there was little space within the structure of the consultation for these tensions to be negotiated.<sup>7</sup> This was exacerbated by the way the report was written. The report doesn't make explicit that tensions emerged through the conduct of the consultation. In this way the possible tensions over the use of the site become narrowed. The report states 'the only real conflict that arose during the Planning for Real events' was 'the allocation of river frontage for housing or public open space' (PAL, 1997: section 9). Through not making explicit the tensions that emerged through the conduct of the consultation the event tended to produce a version of the site as bounded and harmonious. This bounded conception of place isolated the site from wider power relations. The report situates the site within the local planning context and guidelines, but not within the wider power relations such as the high land values that were a key engagement of the politics of the land occupation (PAL, 1997: section 3). The process also adopted a specifically human version of the politics of the site which reproduced 'common-sense' understandings of waste-land as ecologically barren.

In various ways the site's assertive wasteland ecology was rendered absent from the consultation. The model which was based around a depiction of the site didn't represent the wasteland ecology. Discussion of the ecology of the site was also absent from the

exhibition as a London Wildlife Trust observer invited to the consultation remarked.<sup>8</sup> The PAL report notes that the site was vegetated, but without acknowledging the London-wide significance of its plant communities (PAL, 1997: section 2). These exclusions were produced through the structure of the process. The questions that were asked as part of the 'stick a dot' panels of the consultation promoted particular forms of order. They included questions like 'do you want heavy landscaping? Trees, shrubs etc', a question which was supported by a large sample of those consulted (PAL, 1997: appendix one). This question didn't make explicit that there was already an important set of plant communities on the site which might be effected by such landscaping. The cards selected by the PAL volunteers limited the kinds of stories that could be told about the ecology of the site. Participants could place cards such as 'tree' or 'open space' on the model, but these cards were translated through the process in quite 'ordered' ways. Figure 4.1, a visual depiction of the proposals in the report, illustrates that 'tree' cards were translated as isolated single landscaped trees. Excluding the presence and activity of this wasteland ecology meant the process didn't engage with how future uses might co-exist with the wasteland ecology of the site.

Despite the avowedly apolitical way it was written up, the participation events contributed to the reproduction of assertive political identities around the site and also linked the campaign with other struggles. Gardner and Yarwood have argued that techniques of participation are forms of governance which 'can be unequal in terms of power' and 'can be dominated by hegemonic groups with exclusionary agendas' (Gardner and Yarwood, 2000: 409). Participation techniques can also be more generative and active in reconstituting dominant spatial relations than the claims of groups who deploy these techniques suggest. Adopting discourses like 'local people' is a central tactic in developing the legitimacy of participation techniques because it asserts that a certain 'authentic' experience of a place is being tapped into and represented. To tell multiple stories about how people experience a place and envision its future may be seen as destroying the legitimacy that can be won through presenting what 'local people' want in a univocal way. But possibilities can be opened up through making explicit the way the consultation was active in negotiating and constituting political identities rather than being a passive relay of the preconstituted interests of 'local people'.





**Figure 4.1 Computer Projected Image of the Plan (GWCAG, 1997)**

The event continued to mobilise, reproduce and develop a political constituency which contested the site's future. After the event, for example, GWCAG published a newsletter which was distributed to all participants. It hailed participants in the Planning for Real as part of a struggle to contest the future of the site, arguing that 'your continuing involvement is important now that Guinness have sold the site' (GWCAG, 1999: 1). It articulated the event to a hostility to property developers and a commitment to 'social/affordable housing' (GWCAG, 1999: 2). Through these strategies the event was part of the formation of a presence critical of the emergent power relations around the site. This made the events place as part of a history of opposition to Guinness and other property developers clear. The event also publicised this presence of an alternative proposal for the future of the site. There was positive local media coverage and the event drew in the newly elected Labour MP for the area Martin Linton (Borough News, 1/8/97). GWCAG were keen to foster relations with Linton who they thought would be more supportive of their campaign than the Conservative who had just been voted out.<sup>9</sup>

The event was also the site of interconnections that exceeded the bounded spatialities of the Planning for Real model. It was attended by activists from the Oxford office of the Land is Ours, activists based in different parts of London and by representatives from groups like London Wildlife Trust. It sited GWCAG as part of networks of critical engagements with planning through its involvement with Planning Aid for London. Significantly though there was no presence from the Pure Genius group formed by ex-residents of the land occupation. Pure Genius were committed to a more confrontational

style of activity, illustrating how different styles of action can develop and speak to different constituencies of support and cut across diverse constituencies as well as help reproduce them. Thus rather than emerging from a bounded space the activity of the consultation brought together different routes of activity to try and shape assertive political identities in relation to the site. By assertive I refer to the formation of identities which exceed the limits which usually circumscribe the way identities are performed.

This activity began to connect the campaign around the Wandsworth site with other campaigns against plans for the luxury development of similar spaces on the Thames waterfront. After the participation exercise GWCAG became involved in forming the Riverfront Group, and involving diverse groups including Battersea Society, Thamesbank, West London River Group, Wandsworth Society, Deodar Road Residents, Tonsley Residents, Battersea Power Station group, Putney Society & others (GWCAG, 1999). The informal contacts that were the basis of these alliances and networks were formed through events like the Planning for Real consultation. There were connections between the Planning Aid for London group and many different campaigns in London. The alliances between these different campaigns were constituted through realising ‘common ground [...] in opposition to speculative developers’ (GWCAG, 1999). These campaigns drew on the engagement and critique of the official planning process, through activities such as ‘monitoring other planning applications on riverfront sites’ and ‘putting in objections/comments as appropriate’ (ibid.)

These alliances have developed an expansive spatial imagination broadening out from the Gargoyle Wharf site, to tackle similar issues affecting a range of sites. Figure 4.2, a map of the different contested sites on the stretch of the river near to Gargoyle Wharf, illustrates how the Gargoyle Wharf site is now just one contested site of many which have been made part of the ‘terrain of contestation’. These practices hail GWCAG supporters as part of wider struggles over the future of many waterfront sites. In this way the discourses of community mobilised by activists can be more partial and mobile than is acknowledged if the spatial practices and activities through which they are made and re-made are ignored (Rose, 1997b: 8). These forms of activity can re-configure social relations uniting people through practices which can be the focus of unsettling identities and the formation of new, often unintentional or unplanned, solidarities and equivalences. Participation in such events can thus be generative and productive, in ways which exceed just distilling what people’s views of what the future of a given space might be.

Laclau has argued that political representation is ‘constitutively impure’ and can never function as a purely transparent process (Laclau, 1996: 49). Participation techniques can

be constitutive of participant's political identities and can be activities through which alliances can be formed between struggles about different sites. Making this role explicit opens up possibilities for thinking about how tensions and antagonisms might be handled differently. Making explicit their own productive engagements and relations might also enable the practitioners of these techniques to tell or construct multiple and contested stories about places. For to acknowledge the participation's own activity, own angle on events would free it from the assumption that the amalgam of everyone's cards on the Planning for Real model would create a unified view of what the future of the site should be. Participation processes structured by an openness to difference might be harder to handle but they might enable and manage conflict. I discussed this tension with Bruce Mackenzie who conceded that in the consultation 'there was never the exchange of views that one might get in open debate'. He argued that thinking about ways of 'extending the democratic process' through 'getting people to [...] share their views in a non-confrontational way, that would be interesting'.

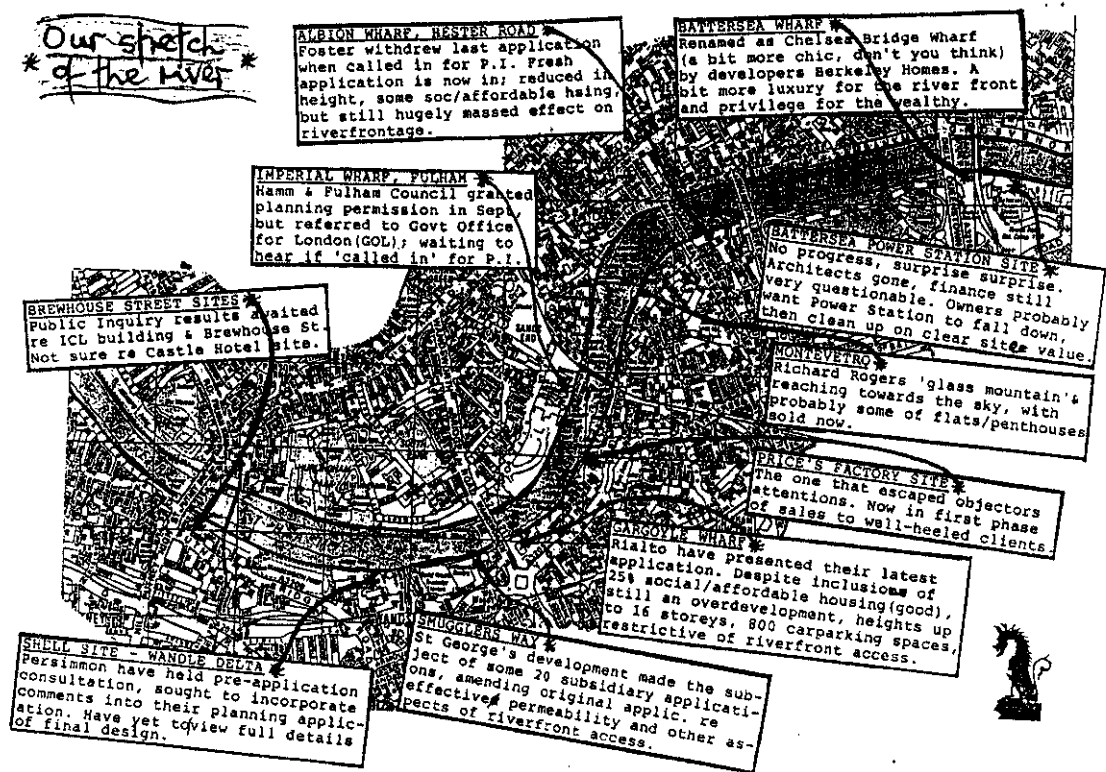


Figure 4.2 Contested Sites Near Gargoyl Wharf (GWCAG, 1999)

Activities of deliberation can be stultifying and circuitous but this engagement suggests the possibility of thinking about participation working in ways which are not

based on the setting down of already constituted views. This would locate participation techniques as part of the ongoing negotiation of power relations. This doesn't mean that such techniques would be structured by the idea of an inevitable adversarial relationship between two groups, those from social or luxury housing, which were homogenous and had fixed *a priori* interests.<sup>10</sup> But a consultation process where difference was not suppressed might allow new tensions to emerge and be part of the conduct of the process. This could be more productive than ossifying the conduct around the most obvious existing ones. It suggests how consultation processes might be reconfigured as ways of negotiating the ongoing and contested power relations in cities, without being structured by a horizon of a final goal of the common good.

Disrupting the elision of neighbourhood and consensus is necessary to allow different possibilities to emerge. One of the most significant ways of doing this is thinking through how place-located political activity can be formed through negotiating cross-cutting relations of power. The next section investigates political activity that was defined by interrelation and through negotiating of cross-cutting relations of power. The section develops an account of how the London Port Strikes of 1768 were formed in relation to routes of subaltern activity. This illustrates that the politics of past struggles over common rights were not the products of organic, telluric communities, although they are often celebrated as such. It emphasises how such political activity was the product of interrelations and in turn produced both co-operation and antagonism between diverse subaltern groups.

#### **4.3 Cross-Cutting Relations of Power, Agency and the Formation of Entangled Political Identities**

The solicitor general, Sir Fletcher Norton, writing the prosecution brief for the trial of eight coal heavers accused of the murder of a sailor, James Beattie, during disturbances associated with the London Port strikes of May, 1768 noted that:

All these prisoners [...] are by trade coal heavers - Irishmen by Birth and papists - a several of them are, as they have bragg'd and given it out themselves, of the gangs of Whiteboys in Ireland, driven out from thence for the most Enormous Crimes. There are about 670 persons in all who follow this trade of coal heaving - two thirds are Irishmen and those in general Roman Catholicks but few of these are quiet laborious men, the rest are of a riotous disposition and ready to join in any kind of disorders.<sup>11</sup>

Assertions that there were links between Irish coal heavers and the Whiteboys were common in reports and accounts of the strikes of May 1768.<sup>12</sup> These strikes were the product of a heterogeneous constituency of riverside workers. They included coal heavers who had been involved in strike and clandestine action from at least February of 1768 and had a much longer history of struggle against the corrupt organisation of their trade.<sup>13</sup> In May strike action spread across diverse riverside trades when sailors attempting to redress grievances relating to wages and the high cost of provisions mimicked the successful strike action of Newcastle pitmen and North East sailors and ‘struck’ sails in the ships on the Atlantic, East India, Greenland, Mediterranean and coastal trades (Sheldon, 1992: 1). Outside London there were strikes by sailors in Newcastle, Sunderland, South Shields, Yarmouth and Whitehaven, and attempted strike action in Bristol. There was also unprecedented rioting in Dublin (Sheldon, 1992: 22, Meier, 1972: 191). Sailors in London hailed other riverside workers as part of their own struggle (see below). Their collective action stopped the flows of imperial networks, commodities and materials. If not inventing the term/ activity ‘to strike’ these actions circulated and developed its importance.<sup>14</sup>

The assertions that there were connections between the Whiteboys and the coal-heavers cannot be separated from the circulation of many ‘counter-insurgent’ rumours about the Whiteboys. Samuel Foote’s drama written about the 1768 strikes implied that Whiteboys learned to handle arms from childhood (Foote, 1778: 49). Here I negotiate this problem through investigating possible continuities of modes of organisation and forms of activity between the Whiteboys and coal heavers and other riverside workers in 1768. I then consider how the political agency and identities of coal heavers was constructed through engaging with multiple cross cutting relations of power. I do this through examining how they contested the unequal material and social orderings of their labour. The section argues that their identities and agency were constructed in relation to official practices which did not perform ‘already constituted’ capitalist property relations. The section also illustrates how labourers’ political identities were constructed through positive relations with a wider constituency of riverside workers and through negotiating interrelations with radical figures such as John Wilkes.

Distinctive modes of organisation and activity emerge in Norton’s Brief and in the reports of his informants which suggest continuities between the activity of the Whiteboys and the coal heavers in the strikes of 1768. The coal heavers’ action and organisation were characterised by secrecy and exemplary intimidation. This secrecy and targeted and legitimised violent action was instituted through the formation of oath-bound secret societies, a key organisational form associated with the Whiteboys.<sup>15</sup> These secret

societies met in particular riverside taverns, spaces of association which were the subject of legal repression after the strikes. After May of 1768, the licenses of 9 publicans were taken away for 'encouraging and harbouring the coal heavers'.<sup>16</sup> An informant George Mayhew 'a coal heaver and an accomplice' noted that 'about 5 or 6 months ago 45 Coal heavers entered themselves into a society by the name of Bucks of which the informant was one'. There was a similar society called 'the Brothers'. The Bucks met at 'the Sign of the Horse and Dray in New Gravel Lane' before they 'moved to the Swan at King James's stairs'. Every member on 'his admission was sworn to be always aiding and assisting his Fellow Members [...] and not to reveal or divulge anything that was done by them even though it was murder.'<sup>17</sup>

Violent forms of clandestine action were performed in similar ways to the actions of the Whiteboys. There were nocturnal assaults on the houses of those who had transgressed their notions of fair conduct.<sup>18</sup> In April, 1768, an assembly of coal heavers armed with stones, cutlasses and muskets attacked the Roundabout Tavern, run by John Green, an undertaker in the coal trade who had organised 'green' labour outside of the coal heavers' combinations. Assisted by the societies of the Bucks and Brothers, they threatened to 'cut him into pieces and hang him on his sign'.<sup>19</sup> Their action constituted similar audacious forms of territorialisation to the Whiteboys. Norton complained that during their disputes with sailors from the Newcastle collier ships, the coal heavers 'grew so audacious as to keep watch on the shore in gangs all day long in order to attack any of the masters of the colliers or their men who should come on shore'.<sup>20</sup> The actions of the coal heavers drew on similar invocations of customary right to those mobilised by the Whiteboys in their contestation of the enclosure of common land. According to Ralph Hodgson, a paternalistic Wapping justice, the labour of unloading the coal vessels might, 'by a kind of prescription of custom, be deemed the property of the Coal-heavers, whose livelihood depended on it' (Hodgson, 1768: 15).

This invocation of customary right was performed and bound together through forms of assertive masculinity that were an important feature of Whiteboy actions and organisation. The stories coal heavers told about their work emphasised the interrelation of work, masculinity and drinking. A Coal heavers' petition of 1769 noted that 'as their labour is very hard, no man can go through it with less than a gallon of beer per day' (Coal heavers, 1769). There were ritualistic initiation ceremonies involving drink and nick-names.<sup>21</sup> There are suggestions that entry to the trade was bound by kinship structures (Rule, 1981: 40). Coal heavers used the ritualised forms of intimidation of 'the Wooden Horse' to punish non organised labour and to prevent other groups working at

the wharfs.<sup>22</sup> This suggests continuities in the 'exemplary forms of intimidation' used by Whiteboys, London coal heavers, Dublin journeyman and Newcastle keelmen, sailors and pitmen.<sup>23</sup> These riverside trades were hubs of interconnection of spatially stretched routes of experience, activity and ideas that stretched across the Atlantic.

The Irish in eighteenth century London were sited in dynamic relation to these interconnections. There was no simple linear movement from Ireland to London. The mobile Irish had multiple routes and rhythms of movement. Many of the Irish hung at Tyburn in the eighteenth century had previous cosmopolitan experiences such as proletarianised labour in the French military service (Linebaugh, 1992: 297-300). The established routes of migration from Ireland to England also underwent significant change through the eighteenth century. There was contestation of the volume of seasonal Irish harvest workers in the mid-eighteenth century and proposals for regulating their numbers (A Citizen of London, 1751: 17-20, Fielding, 1988 [1751]: 143, George, 1925: 124). Patrick Fitzgerald's examination of the passes issued to Irish vagrants on the roads through Buckinghamshire to London between 1741 and 1760 found an increasing number of vagrants/ migrants from the major Munster port cities of Cork and Limerick, especially during the subsistence crisis of 1756-7 (Fitzgerald, 1996: 107). This suggests that Munster, where the Whiteboys were most active, was being bound into interrelations with London. At this time London was alleged to have been viewed by some of the Munster peasantry as 'a kind of paradise' (Willes, [1760] 1990: 76). Migration from Dublin was also significant. It accounted for the largest single concentration of the migrants in Fitzgerald's sample. Dublin craft combinations, especially those of weavers, had similar forms of organisation and action as those recorded among the Whiteboys and Irish coal heavers and weavers in London.<sup>24</sup>

There were important continuities of modes of organisation and forms of action between Whiteboys, London coal heavers and other routed subaltern groups. The evidence of links between London and Munster emphasises the possible existence of interconnections between the Whiteboys and coal heavers and the assertive political activity of coal heavers in 1768 suggests that these interconnections had effects. The dynamics of these interconnections need not have involved the exact transmission of active Whiteboys. It could also have involved the copying and mimicking of their forms of activity which were central to the way that Whiteboy activity moved across Ireland in the early 1760s (see chapter 6). That Norton argues the coal heavers' 'bragg'd and gave it about themselves' that they were Whiteboys does not prove anything about whether these coal heavers were Whiteboys. But it does suggest the circulation of unofficial knowledges

and stories of Whiteboy forms of activity and organisation. This is emphasised by such demonstrable commonalities as the oath-bound secret society which Dorothy George argued was probably introduced in to Wapping by Irish labourers linked to the Whiteboys (George, 1926-9: 236). Riverside workers also had their own histories and traditions of organisation. In 1739 the coal heavers drew up 'Articles of Agreement' in opposition to the coal Undertakers (Linebaugh, 1992: 306). Irish labourers who worked along the East End riverside were among those arrested in 1745 as part of popular disaffection in sympathy with the Jacobites (Rogers, 1977: 20, see also Monod, 1988). Rogers also suggests there is some evidence of a Jacobite underground among London Irish weavers (*ibid*, 27).<sup>25</sup>

For Georg Simmel, the very 'essence' of the secret society was its 'autonomy' (Simmel, 1950, p. 360-1). For the magistrate John Fielding, Rotherhithe and Wapping, 'which places are chiefly inhabited by sailors', were like 'another country'.<sup>26</sup> Ogborn's account of the historical geographies of eighteenth century London, however, has emphasised how such spaces were bound into wider circulations and were the sites of cross cutting relations of power (Ogborn, 1998: 201-211). His account charts some of the emergent spatial techniques used to produce and rationalise these circulations. Projects like the Universal Registry Office of magistrates John and Henry Fielding were interventions in the 'temporal and spatial transformations of eighteenth century London' (*ibid*). They vigorously promoted a vision of circulation, exchange and commerce which envisioned specific relations between labour, property and materials (Ogborn, 1998: 214). The project included disciplinary techniques for the regulation of servant labour and attempted to perform and tell stories about materials as 'commodities' (Fielding, 1988: 5, 8).<sup>27</sup>

An account of subaltern agency in eighteenth century London can emerge through examining how diverse groups of labourers contested the definitions, relations and uses of property and materials envisioned through these mercantile capitalist projects. Rather than viewing riverside labourers as 'autonomous', I want to examine how they constructed their political identities and agency by contesting the unequal material and social orderings performed through these cross-cutting relations of power.

A coal heavers' petition of 1764 demanded parliamentary redress for the conditions and practices of their 'dirty and slavish labour' (Coal heavers, 1764). Their central grievance was that a 1758 Act which had been passed to regulate the trade had been circumvented by the practices of the 'undertakers'. The undertakers were a group of about twenty middlemen, almost all publicans, who 'undertook' to supply Newcastle and other



collier ships with gangs of coal heavers to unload their cargo. These undertakers, who operated systems of networked corruption through interrelations with Newcastle coal dealers, had conspired to undermine the working of the Act.<sup>28</sup> The trade of coal heaving had been established when the Fellowship of Billingsgate Porters 'restricted itself to cleaner cargoes' (George, 1927: 230). The low status of the trade was constructed through its association with such dirty work. This association was contested in the petition of 1764 which challenged their lack of status, complaining that they were not 'Freemen of London' like other porters.<sup>29</sup>

The coal heavers' labour was to unload the coal from ship to the lighters: the flat-bottomed boats which docked alongside the coal wharves. The work 'was done by gangs of sixteen (to eighteen) coal-heavers, who shovelled the coal from platform to platform in the hold, and finally into the measuring vat, from which it was tipped into the lighters' (Ashton and Sykes, 1964: 205). The undertakers controlled the materials and practices of the coal heavers' labour through a set of 'instituted relations' for 'encreasing and supporting their interest'. They paid the coal heavers 'uncertain wages', compelled them 'to spend 6 pence per day' in the undertakers' house on 'mundungus Liquor' and made a raft of deductions from the coal heavers pay.<sup>30</sup> These 'instituted relations' were reproduced and enforced by intimidation. Corrupt Middlesex justices were said to have taken bonds of £500 to indemnify the undertakers for 'their arbitrary and oppressive proceedings'.<sup>31</sup> Coal heavers like Harry Cummerfoot who worked slow to bargain were sent to prison and advocates of the coal heavers like Francis Reynolds and Ralph Hodgson were the subject of ongoing intimidation.<sup>32</sup>

Coal heavers constructed their political agency and identities through challenging the undertakers' control of the practices, tools and materials of coal heaving. When the coal heavers petitioned parliament in 1758 they contested the undertakers' practices of monopolising, or 'engrossing' the supply of the shovels the coal heavers used, so as to rent them out at extortionate rates. A contestation of the practices of middlemen and engrossers was part of the wider relational context of popular politics in the 1760s (see Shelton, 1973: 151, Thompson, 1991: 185-258). The shovels used in coal heaving were 'of divers sort' and were 'of a different Nature and construction, and consist [ed] of more Materials than those used in any other branch of business'.<sup>33</sup> There were only two makers of these specialist shovels: Mr Ivison and Mr Oakham.<sup>34</sup> In the 1750s the coal undertakers, led by Burford Camphire, conspired with Ivison and Oakham to monopolise the supply of shovels. They then charged coal heavers '1 shilling a ship for the loan of shovels worth only 3s. 6d.' (Ashton and Sykes, 1964: 206). A coal heavers' petition of

1758 argued that ‘by an unlawful influence of the said undertakers, the shovel makers absolutely refuse either to sell or to make any shovels for the Petitioners, or even to mend those they have made, though tendered ready money for such work’.<sup>35</sup> The petition argued further the effect of this practice amounted to ‘a deduction of 20s and sometimes much more out of the Petitioner’s labour’.

The coal heavers challenged the way the undertakers had instituted unequal practices through the control of the shovels to try and shape more equitable labour practices. They constructed as an antagonism the access to and right to mend and buy the materials that were integral to their trade. The stories they told about the relations around these materials to the House of Commons committee that had been set up to enquire into their grievances involved the performance of assertive political identities. John Gray, a coal heaver, accused Burford Camphire, the undertaker most clearly implicated in the engrossment of shovels with connections to the Middlesex justices, of trying to bribe and intimidate him. He testified that Camphire had told him ‘he would give him a Note to take out their rotten Bill’.<sup>36</sup> Gray, like other coal heavers who testified against the undertakers, told stories about the material inequalities of their trade in defiance of middlemen who had a history of using their influence among magistrates, constables and the headboroughs to intimidate coal heavers.

Through publicly incriminating the undertakers they succeeded in making some of their grievances visible and contestable. Camphire was convicted for a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons. The Commons concluded a ‘dangerous combination’ had been ‘formed amongst [...] coal-undertakers to deprive the coal-heavers of the use of shovels for unloading coal ships’.<sup>37</sup> Through this demonstration of the unequal social and material orderings they were subject to, the coal heavers developed a powerful case for parliamentary redress. The way they contested the material orderings of their trade was central to the way they constructed their political agency. The stories they told about the practices of their labour produced an ethics about how relations between coal heavers and the materials of their labour should be ordered. These stories articulated a belief that coal heavers had the right to intervene in and shape the materials they used and handled. Their stories suggest how the pride and status constructed in relation to these materials were being violated by the practices of middlemen.

Coal heavers also constructed their political agency through negotiating practices around coal where the definitions and property relations of these materials were not fixed. Their agency and activity could be constructed through intervening in shaping the understandings of these materials. There was not a simply delineated struggle between

owners and middlemen who enforced a set of stable 'already constituted' capitalist property relations and coal heavers who demanded or 'clung to' customary rights to the coal. 'Official' practices around coal were riven by fraudulent measurement and discrepancies.<sup>38</sup> In 1736, John Savidge, who made the vats used to measure and regulate coal, was called before the Court of Aldermen at London Guildhall. Several of his vats were found 'wanting of the measure ascertained by law', the implication being that his vats performed fraudulent measurements.<sup>39</sup> Savidge escaped charges through pointing out that the standards of measurement at the Guildhall and the Exchequer did not agree, further emphasising the discrepancies that structured the official regulatory system for coal.<sup>40</sup> There were also diverse claims to customary rights to coal and heterogeneous uses of coal. Ships masters and mates were recorded as paying coal heavers in coal. The meter and the meter's men, the excise officials responsible for measuring coal, expected the 'privilege' of 'a certain quantity of coals for their private use' (Colquhoun, 1800: 142-3).

Coal heavers' labour practices were located within relations of power which produced coal through diverse and contested forms of property relation and measures. They had their own techniques for negotiating these networks. Coal heavers were infamous for their pilfering.<sup>41</sup> Patrick Colquhoun, the advocate of the formation of a 'river police' whose writings delineated new definitions of property and crime, noted a 'disposition to pilfer' among the coal heavers (Colquhoun, 1800: 143-4). This trope of description was frequently used to describe the labouring Irish and travelled with them. Arthur Young had found the 'labouring poor of Ireland' 'exceedingly addicted to thieving' and pilfering.<sup>42</sup> 'Pilfering', often supported by claims to customary rights, was a dynamic technique labourers used to negotiate the expanding volumes of materials they handled.<sup>43</sup> Through these techniques labourers formed their own material networks that existed alongside those of the official coal trade. These networks were an audacious contestation of attempts to define and fix these materials as the property of specific merchants. Pilfering of coal had gone to 'such a height', 'previous to the establishment of the Marine Police, that a kind of Public Market was held at Execution Dock' for the sale of pilfered coals (Colquhoun, 1800: 142-3). Pilfering and customary rights did not neatly pre-exist the formation of mercantile capitalist networks. They were active techniques through which labourers negotiated how these networks were ordered. These were techniques which were productive of their own material networks, co-produced through labourers' negotiations of official mercantile networks.

Differences in official understandings of how coal and labour should be ordered also had effects. The Coal Heavers Act of 1758 introduced proposals to inculcate more

purified relations of wage-labour, a friendly society to support coal heavers in case of illness and for a central office where coal heavers would be registered. This would be under the control of the Alderman of Billingsgate Ward, William Beckford.<sup>44</sup> Beckford, a leading Jamaican sugar planter, was a hub of the corrupt networks of the West India Interest which 'bought votes and rotten boroughs' and 'forced up the prices' of parliamentary seats (Williams, 1964: 92-93, Fryer, 1984: 48). His was 'the style of the slave master'.<sup>45</sup> The forms of regulated gang labour in the act suggest the circulation and importation of techniques of gang labour from the plantations. The relations instituted by the act, however, quickly disintegrated. Francis Reynolds the agent who administered the scheme was charged with corruption.<sup>46</sup> The undertakers discovered that enlisting in the scheme was voluntary. They sent out circular letters to 'Ireland, Scotland and various parts of this kingdom' advertising for labour to undercut the gangs who were registered under the official scheme (Coal heavers, 1769). To facilitate the introduction of such unskilled labourers they introduced the practice of coal whipping; unloading the coal by using baskets rather than using shovels<sup>47</sup>. These new social and material labour practices were co-produced with particular strategies of power.

In 1767 Ralph Hodgson, a paternalistic Wapping justice, erected an alternative registry Office to oppose Beckford's scheme and to promote the 'contentment [...] of such a number of poor and certainly oppressed people' (Hodgson, 1768: 10). Hodgson's style was based on an understanding of customary rights and of patronage.<sup>48</sup> He presented himself as an 'emancipator' of the coal heavers: this rhetoric pointedly contrasts with the approach of Beckford. Beckford hired two clerks, Russell and Green to circumvent Hodgson's scheme through drawing in fresh Irish immigrant labour to the trade. This seems to have been a tactic to bring in Irish labour to undercut wages in a trade which was already predominantly associated with the Irish.<sup>49</sup> Hodgson's registration scheme was certainly composed of many Irish workers, though there was a heterogeneous composition of coal-heavers.<sup>50</sup> Russell and Green became the focus of coal heavers action. Their taverns were assaulted at night by coal heavers fighting against the breaking of their combinations.<sup>51</sup> The coal heavers also deserted Hodgson's alternative scheme. Hodgson argued that this was because of the undertakers 'lure' of wages of two shillings per score (Hodgson, 1768: 14).

Coal heavers performed assertive political identities through the way they negotiated the cross cutting relations of power involved in different attempts to regulate their labour.<sup>52</sup> Hodgson's account stresses their rejection of the relations of deference inherent in the structure of his alternative scheme. Hodgson writes 'of their daring to seek their

remedy at their own hands, in defiance of government and good order: a violence this, which must inevitably defeat the end they proposed' despite his remonstrations to the contrary (Hodgson, 1768: 17). The word violence is deployed here as much to dramatise the audacity of their attempts at self-organisation as to refer to the 'violence' of their conduct. The audacity of their conduct was constituted through positive relations with the diverse constituency of riverside labourers that struck in May of 1768.

The coal heavers were given a central role in descriptions of the mobilisations of these strikes: 'sailors, taylors, coopers, Lightermen, Watermen &c. follow one another, the adventurous coal heavers leading the van.'<sup>53</sup> Through such 'audacious' action the coal heavers' activity spilled out of the space/time confines of disputes over the organisation of one trade, and the organisational form of the oathbound secret society. They made a vibrant contribution to the wider crowd actions and strikes of May and June 1768. In these strikes labourers from diverse trades were mobilised partly by sailors drawing on skills and repertoires honed in riots and political activity across the North Atlantic.<sup>54</sup> Sailors issued proclamations which 'called on all watermen, lightermen, ballast men and ballast heavers, coal heavers, etc., to leave their duty and not to go to work till our wages be settled' (Shelton, 1973: 188). Official correspondence registers the devastating effect of such co-operation:

The sailors have this morning completed what was before unfinished with respect to unman[n]ing and otherwise disabling all the ships in the river [...] The watermen have likewise been pressing all of their corps to join [...] and this morning the coal porters have taken the same resolution [...] so that no kind of business is suffered to go on upon, or near the River.<sup>55</sup>

These strikes happened alongside the popular disturbances associated with the election and imprisonment of the radical figure John Wilkes in the spring-summer of 1768. At times both coal heavers and sailors appropriated the cause of Wilkes and the slogan 'Wilkes and liberty'.<sup>56</sup> But they also negotiated their political identities and activity through an ambivalence towards Wilkes, even at times an explicit rejection of him.<sup>57</sup> The diverse constituency mobilised among riverside workers was far more 'motley' than the politics of the 'middling sort' envisioned by Wilkes or his City based supporters like Alderman Beckford.<sup>58</sup> Wilkes's politics was performed through an exclusionary association of liberty with English patriotism (Colley, 1992: 105-117, Wilson, 1995: 206-236). A contemporary

aristocrat emphasised how in 1768 the ‘greatest enemies’ of the North Britons [Wilkes’ political grouping]

were the sons of riot and detraction, wretches of a mongrel descent, the immediate offspring of Dutch Jews, Italian rope dancers, or French cooks by Irish strollers or prostitutes from the Isle of Man [...] Nay, some of these Englishmen were the immediate sons of Jamaica, or African Blacks, by Asiatic Mulattoes, or Muscovites born in the distant provinces of Siberia.

(A letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of T---E, 1768: 22).

These multi-ethnic rioters would have found themselves outside Wilkes’ definition of English radicalism. The pamphlet suggests the ‘crowd’ was constituted through bringing together a diverse constituency of multi-ethnic labourers. This was a constituency created through the audacious activity and organising traditions of multi-ethnic sailors and in which there was assertive action of prostitutes as well as male sailors.<sup>59</sup> The pamphlet suggests the extent to which this heterogeneous constituency of labourers exceeded the forms of mobilisation associated with Wilkes. For despite his reputation for being able to manipulate the politics of the London crowd, much of the crowd action of 1768 targeted spaces and issues which were not associated with Wilkes. Further, the alliances in these crowds performed audacious and motley action which differed strongly from Wilkes’s politics of the ‘middling sort’.

These forms of interaction suggest the possible importance of Atlantic routes of political activity. John Fielding wrote in 1768 that slaves returning from London ‘intoxicated by liberty’ ‘have been the occasion of those insurrections that have lately caused and threatened such mischiefs and Dangers on the Islands in the West Indies’ (Fielding, *ibid.*). This ‘phase of slave resistance’ was initiated by Tacky’s revolt, a slave uprising in Jamaica in 1760 ‘more formidable than any hitherto known in the West-Indies’ (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 221-224, Craton, 1982: 125-139). Fielding poses a simplistic connection between London and these events, based on the assumption that liberty could only originate in England. But it is possible there were more intricate interconnections between these slave revolts and subaltern political activity in London in the 1760s. Tacky’s Revolt ‘occasioned some antiplantocratic feeling in the metropolis’. Samuel Johnson toasted the ‘next insurrection of the negroes in the West-Indies’. His black servants, known for their associational culture, may have done the same (Craton,

1982: 138, Fryer, 1984: 69). There were also alliances between slaves and the London 'mob'. This suggests that assertions that the crowd in the strikes of 1768 was multi-ethnic are important. Fielding, who as a magistrate and instigator of the Bow Street police office had direct experience of policing London, noted that slaves in London had 'the Mob on their side' making it 'dangerous' for the 'owners of slaves to recover the Possession of them' (Fielding, 1768: 143-44). Fryer suggests this activity produced a principle of identification and equivalence which 'had nothing in common with the sentimentality of many middle-class abolitionists' (Fryer, 1984: 72).

Like the Fieldings' plan for a Universal Registry Office, the coal heavers' and other riverside labourers' actions in 1768 formed a decisive intervention in what Ogborn describes as the 'temporal and spatial transformations of eighteenth century London' (Ogborn, 1998: 201-211). This action was productive. It developed and circulated assertive forms of political activity and organisation: the strike and the oath-bound secret society. It was created by, and was the site of the formation of, 'motley' alliances which cut across differences of ethnicity, trade, gender, religion and nationality. These differences were the very terrain on which Wilkite radicalism was being constructed.<sup>60</sup> It was activity which had diverse histories and geographies. The coal heavers' involvement in the strikes, for example, was part of an ongoing contestation of the material and social orderings of their trade. The audacity of the action was the product of interconnections between multiple routes of subaltern experience (these routes will be discussed further in chapter 6).

Through situating the formation of labourers' political identities in cross-cutting relations of power, this section has begun to outline aspects of their agency which would be lost if their activity was assumed to be autonomous. For it is through locating their activity within the context of heterogeneous orderings of the material and social practices associated with their trades that their agency in contesting and negotiating these relations can emerge. Coal heavers contested and negotiated these orderings in a situation where the definitions of property relations and measures of coal was far from fixed even within the official organisational practices of the coal trade. They created assertive political identities through making visible and contestable the material and social orderings of the trade which they considered to be unequal. Through this they articulated undertakers' practices around the control of shovels as antagonisms. Through techniques such as pilfering they were part of the construction of unofficial material networks which were formed as they negotiated the official networks of the coal trade. These techniques performed alternative social and material orderings to those of the official coal trade.

Riverside labourers negotiated their political activity through contesting the attempts of middlemen in the coal trade to monopolise the control of the practices of the coal heavers' labour. This involved contesting the unequal practices shaping how materials were generated and distributed. For the very political identities and agency of labourers were formed through the way they negotiated these unequal cross-cutting relations of power. In this way their identities were formed through intervening in how the material and social orderings of their trade were articulated. They contested particular aspects of these forms of ordering which they articulated as unequal, or as outside of fair conduct. Through these interventions, a heterogeneous constituency of labourers crafted a vibrant political agency, which rejected the traditions of deference invoked by figures like Hodgson as well as the 'political economy' of figures like Beckford. This agency was 'motley' and uneven. It provoked tensions as well as co-operation within and between subaltern groups as section 4 will demonstrate. But it was political activity which was defined through engaging with multiple cross-cutting relations of power. The next section discusses the challenges this kind of heterogeneous political activity raises for attempts to think political activity spatially.

#### **4.4 Equivalences and Militant Particularisms**

The heterogeneous political constituencies formed through militant crowd and strike action in 1768 'brought together' diverse groups through their interconnections in riverside spaces and labour. This political activity differed strongly from the strategies of localism that I argued in section 1 are being adopted in different ways to structure contemporary political activity around environmental issues. The assertive political constituency constructed during the strikes was formed through motley alliances among labourers who travelled different trade routes. Riverside trades were hubs of interconnection of diverse radical experiences and routes of activity, which were formed as labourers negotiated the cross-cutting power relations of mercantile networks. Through their activity this constituency could exert pressure on the functioning of mercantile networks. The major pressure exerted on government figures to end the strikes on the Thames, for example, came from the Hudson Bay Company.

In May of 1768, the company 'had three ships and a Brigantine fitting out for their respective voyages'. The 'difficulty of the voyage' one of their correspondents to the Home Office noted was 'so critical that it cannot by any means be effected unless the ships are permitted to depart from London about 20th of May'.<sup>61</sup> Delay in disembarking threatened further 'danger [...] to the Trade in these parts in case the Indians should be



disappointed in their expected supplies'. The Hudson Bay's official history notes it had acquired a bad reputation among sailors (Wilson, 1899: 35). These sailors and other riverside workers were able to exploit the companies' precarious situation within the constraints posed by tides, winds and seasons. The forms of 'long-distance control' constructed by the Hudson Bay Company depended on negotiating successfully these powerful non human forces (Law, 1986). The Company was forced to give in to the sailors' demands 'for fear of losing their voyage'.<sup>62</sup> The sailors' action thus exerted pressure across a networked system of mercantile exchange.

The riverside labourers strikes in 1768 were characterised by militant, place-located, but certainly not bounded action. The action was not positioned in absolute opposition to mercantile capitalist networks. But their action contested the forms and terms of their locations within the material and social orderings of these networks. These actions brought together those with different experiences of these power-geometries. It brought together Irish cottiers who had been dispossessed of their land through enclosure and sections of London's black population dislocated through the networks of the slave trade. This section outlines how this focus on the networked construction of place-based political activity impacts on attempts to theorise militant place-based action. Adopting this networked account of political activity can help envision the formation of equivalences as reconstituting place-located political identities.

David Harvey's vivid account of the politics around the Cowley car plant in East Oxford develops a sustained engagement with Raymond Williams' concept of 'militant particularism' (Harvey, 1996: 19-45). Williams deployed the term 'militant particularism' as a strategy to 'incorporate place more directly into socialist theorising' (Harvey, 1996: 32). He used it to describe and celebrate the 'unique and extraordinary character of working class self-organisation' in 'connect[ing] particular struggles to a general struggle' (Williams, 1989: 115). At the crux of this process are practices of self-organisation which perform the work of 'properly bringing together' different struggles (Williams, 1989, Harvey, 1996). For Williams and Harvey, this involves bringing together spatially distant struggles. The task of a socialist politics becomes uniting different forms of local socialist engagements to form a universal global ambition (Harvey, 1996: 44).

Harvey's discussion of militant particularisms engages with arguments which unambiguously suggested that 'the jobs at Cowley are jobs worth saving, both for the workers themselves and in the interest of the community as a whole' (Hayter, 1994: 278). Through arguing against an 'unproblematic extension outwards from the plant of a prospective model of a total social transformation' he unsettles the idea of a bounded

politics centred on the work place (Harvey, 1996: 23). But his invocation of militant particularism reproduces some of the tensions around the rootedness, authenticity and 'long experience' that pervaded William's use of the term (see Gilroy, 1987). Harvey's account of militant particularism views it as a bounded achievement of social relations in particular places. He writes:

The move from tangible solidarities understood as patterns of social life organized in affective and knowable communities to a more abstract set of conceptions that would have universal purchase involves a move from one level of abstraction – attached to place – to another level of abstraction capable of reaching out across space [...] The shift from one conceptual world, from one level of abstraction to another, can threaten the common purpose and values that ground the militant particularism achieved in particular places.

(Harvey, 1996: 33).

The politics of place here becomes the achievement of bounded, affective and knowable communities. There is little space for these militant political identities to be the product of interrelations, or formed through negotiating interrelations. The result is that Harvey's use of the term militant particularisms refigures local political identities as 'emerging fully formed from their own special viscera' (Gilroy, 1993: 4).

The key tension in Harvey's account is that he characterises these socialisms as being rooted and cemented primarily through 'local bonds' (Harvey, 1996: 23). This isolates militant political identities from the multiple inter-connections in relation to which they were constituted. He ignores, for example, the way that the 'militant particularisms' of the Cowley plant negotiated the ethnic heterogeneity of East Oxford.<sup>63</sup> Harvey through retaining this bounded conception of place-based politics reproduces Williams' elision of authenticity, rootedness and the workings of 'long experience'. This closes down the agency that is possible for militant place-located action to effect. For militant particularist political identities are defined in Harvey's account against the more 'metropolitan' tropes of theory and abstraction (Harvey, 1996: 33). His account of political activity is structured by a constitutive separation between 'the militant particularisms of lived lives' and the 'struggle to achieve sufficient critical distance and detachment to form global ambitions' (Harvey, 1996: 44). Harvey seeks to examine how '[i]deals forged out of the affirmative experience of solidarities in one place get generalized and universalized as a working model of a new form of society that will benefit all of humanity' (Harvey, 1996: 32).

Global ambition or universalism becomes performed through the work of uniting 'already constituted' militant particularisms.

What I have tried to demonstrate in discussing how the strikes of May of 1768 negotiated cross-cutting relations of power is that this was a set of events where it makes little sense to make such a rigid distinction between the 'local' and the 'universal'. The strikes were place-located events, but the political identities and agency formed through them were not bounded. They were formed through co-operation between different mobile subaltern groups in contesting the material and social orderings of mercantile networks. The very formation of this place-located politics 'brought together' different routes of subaltern activity and techniques. Some of this was the result of the histories and 'long experience' of some riverside labourers in negotiating the unequal organisations of their trades. But the political activity was also shaped by interconnections such as the influence of Irish labourers who translated forms of organisation and activity honed in different localities and routes of activity, such as the Whiteboys in Munster, to negotiate these unequal relations. The events were also influenced by the vibrant routed political cultures of sailors. The militant particularisms of the London Port Strikes were constituted not just through the workings of long experience in a particular place. They were achieved through the histories and geographies of subaltern connections that coalesced around the wharfs and riverside taverns.

Detailing how these different interconnections are brought together in a place permits a focus on how place-located identities can become reconfigured and reconstituted through the meeting up of these different assertive political trajectories. Militant particularisms can be performed and constituted through the way they 'bring together' different routes of activity and negotiate cross cutting threads of power. This problematises the relations between the 'local' and 'universal' offered by Harvey, a position which conflates two very different binaries, local/ global and particular/ universal. This allows equivalences to be envisioned as part of the formation of place-located identities rather than being constructed through the connection of 'already constituted' militant particularisms. It suggests how militant particularisms can be formed through connection and emphasises that the coming together of different routes of activity can be productive of the kinds of unsettling of identities that permit the formation of alliances and equivalences between different groups.

Place-located political activities are not necessarily the building blocks of political alliances which will be then linked together by a coterie of intellectuals divorced from the 'lived lives' of specific 'militant particularisms'. Rather place-located activity can be the

site of coming together of different trajectories of activity which can reconstitute the relations and identities formed around specific places. The action of the Inter-Continental Caravan at the Bayer plant in Leverkusen, discussed in chapter 3, formed militant place-located activity through tracing alliances of those who had exposure to the effects of the multi-national Bayer. This also reconstituted the activity and identities of the radical group on the Works Council of the Bayer plant. It enabled them, for example, to organise a demonstration in Leverkusen against their employer, something they had never done before. Actions like these suggest there can be a more diverse topography of connection between different forms of radical activity than that suggested by Harvey. These activities can be formed through the connections of many lines and networks rather than a simple articulation between the local and global (Latour, 1993: 117-120).

The place-located activity where these different networks and lines coalesce and meet up can be the site of chance formations of new, often unintentional or at least unplanned, solidarities and equivalences. Thus, as the discussion of the Planning for Real suggested, participation can be a process which brings together diverse groups and can unsettle and exceed the limits imposed by the way such processes are structured. The militant particularisms formed through events like the Port strikes in 1768 were sites of the circulation and formation of techniques such as the strike. They also helped to circulate and intensify ideas and legitimising notions of particular techniques of negotiating mercantile capitalist orderings. The account of the activity of riverside labourers has emphasised how alliances were constructed through similar invocations and knowledges of customary right. The legitimising notions associated with ideas of customary right shaped the practices through which diverse groups of labourers negotiated the ways mercantile capitalist networks generated, transported and distributed materials such as coal.

The alliances of diverse groups of labourers were not formed outside of the ongoing and contested negotiation of material practices. It was through positive practices with relation to coal and the tools of the coal heavers' trade that assertive political identities were generated. For practices through which coal heavers intervened in the negotiation of materials were the ways in which they constituted aspects of their identities such as independence, skill and pride. These aspects of their identities were being assaulted by the undertakers' monopolising the supply of tools and the recoding of customary rights to coal as theft or pilfering. The assertion of the importance of these practices in opposition to the demands of middlemen, was part of a relational context which was contesting the emergent orderings of mercantile capitalism. There are continuities with the way that

Whiteboys contested the assault on the independent identities constituted in relation to commoning practices, for example. This suggests how it was in hubs of interconnections like the waterfront in London that forms of political identities constituted through particular ways of negotiating and generating materials were being negotiated.

These acts of ‘bringing together’ different routes of activity are not commensurate with the formation of an easy pluralism, free of antagonisms. The formation of assertive political identities in the Port strikes opened up the possibility for alliances between different striking workers. It also threatened the durability of other alliances. The coal-heavers’ involvement in the strikes and crowd action of May 1768 effectively ended the possibility of alliances with paternalistic advocates like Ralph Hodgson. The Wandsworth Planning for Real event brought together a set of planning volunteers, experts, activists and people resident near the site. But this action didn’t successfully include ex-residents of the occupation or Gargoyle Wharf’s assertive plant communities as part of the ongoing contestation of the site. One of the important ways that the durability of solidarities is effected is through the kinds of spatial imaginations of power adopted and performed through political activity. The kinds of local, bounded identities adopted by some forms of green politics through downplaying the importance of connection and interrelation close down the kinds of imagination necessary for the formation of vibrant and durable solidarities. The locations of riverside labourers in different relation to cross cutting relations of power also put stress on the formation of solidarities in the 1768 strikes. The next section outlines how the spatial imaginations of power relations formed through political activity can have effects on the forms of solidarity constructed through joint action.

#### **4.5 Performing Solidarities**

The previous section has argued that equivalences can be formed through the coming together and negotiation of different routes of political activity and that this can in turn reconstitute place-located identities. This section applies this thinking to the conduct of particular solidarities. It discusses how the ways maps of power are imagined has effects on the identities formed through political activity. This sets up key tensions which will be discussed in detail in chapter 5. The section examines the tensions produced by the way solidarities are performed within cross-cutting relations of power. It develops this through examining some of the antagonisms that emerged between different subaltern groups within the London port strikes. The section then examines tensions in the solidarities formed among counter-globalisation movements through a discussion of the Inter

Continental Caravan. This discussion examines how the ICC negotiated tensions which were generated through bringing together movements which reified bounded localities or nation-states as key alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation.

The proclamations of sailors in the Port strikes of 1768 spoke to a diverse constituency through hailing diverse riverside workers as part of their own struggle. The imagination of solidarity formed through such activity enabled action to spill out of the confining structures of trade-based organisations and of closed organisations such as the secret society. This produced alliances and intersubjectivities which cut across differences of ethnicity and trades which were constitutive of subaltern political identities in eighteenth century London. These differences were articulated as divisions by official politics. Sir Fletcher Norton's brief cited above repeatedly marks the coal heavers by their ethnicity and religion. But it wasn't only in official taxonomies that such differences were articulated in hostile ways. Throughout the eighteenth century there was violent intimidation of Irish harvest workers in England. In 1774 English labourers engaged in pitched battles around Edgware to try to put an end to the practice of employment of such workers (George, 1925: 349n25). In the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots 'the Irish coal heavers of Wapping threatened reprisals upon dissenting meeting houses if further damage [against Roman catholic churches] ensued' (Rogers, 1998, p. 166-7).

There is some detailed evidence that the solidarities on the riverside in 1768 cut across these divisions. The coal heavers hung for the assault on Green's pub included one who was attended to by 'a man of John Wesley's persuasion' as well as Irish Roman catholics.<sup>64</sup> Thomas Davis, a coal heaver from Shropshire, was tried along with eight coal heavers with Irish names accused of the murder of James Beattie.<sup>65</sup> But these alliances did not 'bring together' different routes of activity in necessarily harmonious ways. The formation of assertive political identities opened up the possibility for alliances between different striking labourers but it also threatened the durability of other alliances. Different groups of riverside labourers were positioned in different relation to the cross cutting relations of power of mercantile networks. These became articulated as violent antagonisms between Newcastle colliers and coal heavers in the conduct of the April-May strikes.

In trying to redress their own grievances, coal heavers cut into the fragile labour practices of the collier sailors. The work of these sailors was subject to uncertainties. Changes in tides and weather conditions meant that the time that the collier ships took for return journeys to Newcastle was highly variable. Nonetheless these sailors 'were paid a lump sum for the return voyage from the Tyne, regardless of the time taken' (George,

1927: 239). Preventing the unloading of the coal further delayed the uncertain time of the voyage and the coal heavers' strike action thus impacted directly on the Newcastle sailors. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1768 'coal heavers went on board the colliers [...] and obliged the men to quit their work' (Humpherus, 1887: 274). The sailors became aggrieved at the coal heavers who kept a picket on the shore keeping 'them indefinitely in the river by refusing to unload their ships' (George, *ibid.*). Violent conflict between the sailors and coal heavers resulted in the murder of a collier sailor James Beattie by coal heavers on May 24th, 1768. Eight coal heavers were tried for this murder, two of whom, James Murphy and James Dogan, were convicted and hung.<sup>66</sup> The account of the trial is riven by accusation and counter-accusation between sailors and coal heavers about who was at fault for these conflicts.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, although some durable solidarities were formed between diverse riverside groups, tensions existed alongside these forms of co-operation. Bolster has emphasised that tensions existed alongside the forms of co-operation crafted between Atlantic maritime workers of different ethnicities (Bolster, 1997: 13-15, 100-1). Through the conduct of the strike the different relations of coal heavers and Newcastle collier sailors to mercantile networks became articulated in antagonistic ways. This emphasises that commonalities and solidarities do not necessarily pre-exist interaction. They are formed through the way activity is conducted in specific ways, for example, through the way striking sailors on the Thames waterfront hailed other riverside workers as part of their own struggle. This emphasises that how these spatial routes are made sense of and related to among diverse constituencies is important in the kinds of political activity that takes place and the kinds of solidarities that are formed. To negotiate equivalences is not only a question of connecting different struggles, as Harvey's celebration of the slogan 'only connect' suggests (Harvey, 1996: 431-2). It is also a question of thinking about how different struggles relate to one another. This can unsettle the identities of those involved in political activity rather than connecting them along a single axis of identification.

The political constituencies formed among the London riverside workers in 1768 emerged from unofficial contacts and associations. The activity of the Inter-Continental Caravan (ICC) was also the product of unofficial contacts. The activity of the ICC, however, was defined by an attempt to institute practices of solidarity between different counter-globalisation movements. These solidarities were defined by collective mobilisation against transnational capital and agribusiness. The ICC 'was original in linking North and South not by the usual calls for solidarity with the South, but by a campaign against common enemies (with the South helping the North more than the

reverse!))' (ICC, 1999b). The ICC attempted to form solidarities between movements from the North and South which were structured by co-operation in shared actions. This envisioned more equal topographies of exchange than is often the case in North-South alliances; alliances which are often structured by unequal power relations such as the transmission of Aid or expertise in quite linear ways from the North to South. The ICC neatly disrupted such an hierarchical model of exchange in favour of more rhizomorphic and routed forms of solidarities. But these solidarities were also formed in relation to other commonalities, some of which put stresses on the ways that solidarities were conducted through the Caravan.

One of the key commonalities that held the different movements involved in the ICC was a shared rejection of Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGO's) approach to alternative politics. A 'rejection of reformist, NGO-style 'top down' approaches to resistance' is a key part of the collective identity of People's Global Action (PGA), the coalition of grassroots' organisations that convened the Caravan (Townes, 1999, PGA, 1999a). The solidarities envisioned through the ICC process were brought together through further commonalities than just common enemies. They were shaped through common scepticism of NGO style approaches to resistance, through shared use of techniques of 'direct action' and common commitment to non-hierarchical structures. This commitment to alternatives to NGO styles of organisation was also structured by a shared stress on the importance of the local as a key site of alternatives.

Professor Nanjundaswamy made this explicit in a speech in Cologne at a demonstration against the World Economic Summit on 19th June 1999 which argued that:

We [the ICC] have come here to build bridges between people who want to reclaim their future, to disobey the institutions that run the current, self-destructive system of global economic, political and military governance, and to take their own power in their hands in order to construct a different world. A world where local people are in control of their local economy, where centralised political and economic power disappear, where economic growth and increased consumption give way to quality of life and equality as social goals, where militarism and aggression become bad memories of the past.

(Nanjundaswamy, 1999)

The ways in which 'local people' were envisioned in the politics of the Caravan had effects on the durability of the solidarities that were formed through its conduct. The rejection of NGOs tended to mean that different 'local' and 'grassroots' organisations were



set up as unproblematised alternatives to these organisations. Alliances were made around commonalities in the techniques of activity and organisation being used. This tended to assume that the political identities being produced through these forms of activity and organisation were necessarily similar and 'progressive'. While non governmental organisations were viewed as sullied by their links with power, 'grassroots' organisations were constructed as largely outside of dominant power relations and an expression of authentic resistance. In the London meetings, while there was sustained debate about whether to invite speakers from organisations like the World Development Movement, there were attempts to close down critical scrutiny of the grass roots organisations that links were being made with.<sup>68</sup> A critique of the Caravan, written from within the organisation, criticised the 'large scale brown nosing of politicians and Non Governmental Organisations' involved in procuring visas, suggesting the Caravan was contaminated by these links (Do or Die, 1999: 28-29).

This position is based on a quite reductive view of the divisions between non-governmental organisations and grass-roots movements. This division is mobilised in quite stark form in some recent analytical writing which contrasts non governmental organisations unfavourably with grassroots organisations (Cockburn and St Clair, 2000: 53-69, Demovoric, 1998). The Wandsworth example illustrates that there can be productive interrelations between very different forms of political organisation and that movements which are not strictly from the 'grass-roots' can have effects of radicalising some quite 'conservative' forms of local opposition. Relations to NGOs have also been articulated in different ways by the different movements that are part of PGA. The Zapatistas, whose activity was central to the formation of PGA, have contacts with Mexican NGOs. Through e-mail communiqués they have hailed NGOs in Mexico as 'a fundamental part of the movement toward a decent peace' 'because we have seen in them a future to which we aspire' (Marcos, 1995: 149-9). Thus some forms of radical political activity do not constitute their identities in such a negative way against NGOs. The importance of this argument is not that relations with NGOs should not be critically scrutinised, rather that the adoption of a rigid division between NGOs and grassroots movements had some unintended consequences.

This uncritical valorisation of grassroots movements left the Caravan ill-placed to negotiate some of the key tensions of counter-globalisation politics. I use the term counter-globalisation to suggest the connections and internationalist orientation of some opposition to neo-liberal globalisation. For a multiplicity of political identities are being formed through opposition to processes of neo-liberal globalisation. Lash and Urry have

argued that the new social movements of the 1980s and 1990s include reactionary neo-tribalisms as well as the more 'progressive' forces represented by green or feminist groups (Lash and Urry, 1994: 49, 318). Morris-Suzuki notes that whereas Lash and Urry place a 'reassuring spatial boundary between the two' 'reactionary neo-tribalisms are not geographically separate from other forms of social movement' (ibid). She argues that '[w]hile some movements try to forge new identities and to win recognition for suppressed forms of knowledge, others seek to buttress existing national or ethnic barriers and to reassert established certainties' (ibid.). The ICC juxtaposed movements and participants who belong to both of Morris-Suzuki's categories.

This had effects on the kinds of solidarities that emerged through the process. Although the Caravan was conceived of as a process which would institute solidarities between different struggles against globalisation, some of the particularistic ways that resistance to globalisation was envisioned closed down the potential productiveness of these solidarities. This emphasises how closed particularisms can move and are not necessarily isomorphic with place. Some of the activists from the Indian farmers' movements were uncomfortable about speaking alongside activists from Nepal at the Public Hearing in London. Some of the Indian delegation became angry when it became apparent that both members of the two-strong Nepali delegation would speak. They argued that they thought it was an 'Indian not a Nepali Caravan'.<sup>69</sup> This illustrated that some of the Indian activists were not committed to allowing the stories of non-Indian activists to be told at the hearing. There were other ways that particularist identities were reproduced. There were many cross group connections. A Maharashtra-based activist I spoke to in Cologne proudly displayed a baseball cap with the logo of the Brazilian land rights campaign MST which he said he'd been 'given by a friend from MST'. But Indian activists also wore T-shirts with slogans like '*East and West India is Best.*' There were complaints that the Indian farmers' leaders did not take the non-Indian participants in the Caravan particularly seriously. In their speeches they tended to make up places where participants had come from. They erroneously referred to 'our friends from Khazakstahn' rather than accurately reflecting the composition of the Caravan. Most seriously there were reports of harassment of non-Indian delegates and the reportedly pro-Nazi remarks made by one of the Indian delegates (Do or Die, 1999: 29).

An assumption of the inherently 'progressive' qualities of grassroots organisations proved unhelpful in distinguishing between which groups and social movements were interested in forging new inclusive identities and which were interested in buttressing the interests of groups such as Indian farmers in a narrow, particularistic way. The latter

tended to produce interrelations networking these particularisms rather than unsettling or generating new connections. Such practices allowed quite fixed versions and stories of Indian nationalist identities to be reproduced within the activity rather than be re-configured or unsettled. This led to some European activists expressing discomfort that the ICC at times seemed to be an 'Indian nationalist caravan'.<sup>70</sup> These tensions suggest that an uncritical view of 'local', 'autonomous' grassroots organisations is not adequate ground for the difficult work of forming equivalences against neo-liberal globalisation. Adopting a view of local, grassroots organisations as positive does not tend to allow resources for discriminating between movements which generate bounded, particularistic identities which can be as hostile to foreign 'others' as to trans-national capital and movements which are defined by the creation of solidarities with unlike actors. It also closes down the possibilities of unsettling and modifying the identities of struggles against globalisation through productive interrelation with other struggles.

How the power relations of neo-liberal globalisation are imagined has effects on the kinds of oppositional political identities formed in relation to it. The formation of durable and productive solidarities can be closed down by opposition which produces closed, particularist identities. These are tensions that cut across the formations of equivalences which can be related in part to the imaginations and performance of spatial relations that emerge through political activity. Bounded and particularistic forms of political identity proved to have impacts on the durability of the solidarities that were constructed through the activity of the Caravan. The way spaces of politics are imagined and performed has important effects on the political identities formed through activity. For how relations of power are imagined and made contestable has effects on whether political activity produces new identities or buttresses fixed, existing interests. Chapter 5 will take up these tensions in detail.

#### **4.6 Conclusions**

This chapter has developed accounts of how different 'environmentalisms of the poor' have constructed their political identities and agency. I have argued that locating subaltern political activity within cross-cutting relations of power can allow the agency of such politics to come to the fore. I have also argued that the agencies of different environmentalisms of the poor are formed through ongoing contestations of particular social and material orderings. The agency of groups like the London coal heavers can emerge through examining the way they contested the orderings performed through the organisation of the trade.

These accounts situate agency and identity as emerging through the negotiation of cross-cutting relations of power. They suggest that the privileging of bounded, local communities as a utopian site of resistance and struggle is problematic. In contrast to this I have adopted an emphasis on how place-located activity and identities can be reconfigured through the formation of solidarities. This allows a more optimistic view of the formation of place-located identities and their potential agency to emerge than is adopted by Harvey. Rather than viewing militant particularisms as already constituted before the formation of larger scale political movements, I have argued that they can emerge from the way different routes of activity are brought together in particular places.

I have also suggested that the way in which spatial relations are related to through political activity can have effects on the forms of solidarities produced through political activity. This has been a particularly important tension in the political identities formed by counter-globalisation movements. The next chapter examines how the spatial practices and imaginations through which movements contest and relate to power-geometries have effects on the political identities formed through their activity.

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<sup>1</sup> Shiva, Jafri, Beli and Holla-Bhar (1997) oppose the 'enclosures' of contemporary capitalism with an invocation of past Indian communities which had harmonious social and ecological relations. They argue that 'in the commons no one can be excluded' (Shiva, et al., 1997: 9).

<sup>2</sup> Guha, 1982, 1997: ix-xv, De Certeau, 1984, Bey, 1991, Simmel, 1950: 360-1.

<sup>3</sup> For abuse of participation processes, see Monbiot, 2000: 93-126.

<sup>4</sup> TLIO/Interview/1-20/5/1999. All subsequent quotes taken from this interview and a good deal of background information.

<sup>5</sup> Observations made during the consultation. This impression was corroborated with comments from Bruce in the interview.

<sup>6</sup> TLIO/Discussions/4-1/6/ 1997.

<sup>7</sup> This is a wider absence in approaches to participation. The New Economic Foundation's useful guide to 21 different participation techniques doesn't include guidance on how such techniques might negotiate socially polarised communities (New Economics Foundation, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> Correspondence in London Wildlife Trust's file on Gargoyle Wharf.

<sup>9</sup> GWCAG were however sceptical of his claim that Developers were in 'listening mood'.

<sup>10</sup> This position differs from Young's account of justice which adopts an essentialist and unchanging conception of the group which doesn't allow the identities of different groups to be reconstituted through action (Young, 1990, for a critique, see Mouffe, 1993: 85-6).

<sup>11</sup> TS 11/2696 Box 818.

<sup>12</sup> See Walpole cited above, *The Public Advertiser* 9, 16 June, cited by Dobson, 1980: 85 and Foote, 1778.

<sup>13</sup> *The Whole Proceedings Upon the King's Commission of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery for the City of London*, 1768: 244, here after referenced as Proceedings.

<sup>14</sup> On the genealogy of the term to strike see Linebaugh and Rediker 1991: 30-31n40.

<sup>15</sup> On the Whiteboys' oath bound secret-societies see chapter 3 and chapter 6.

<sup>16</sup> TS 11/443/1408.

<sup>17</sup> Information of George Mayhew, an appendix to Norton's brief. There are obvious problems with reliance on the testimony of informants, but their testimony can point to organisational dynamics which it is otherwise impossible to glean any sense of. Thompson emphasises that this information cannot be *a priori* dismissed as false or worthless (Thompson, 1968: 648).

<sup>18</sup> For Whiteboys' nocturnal assaults on houses see FDJ, 3-6 July 1762, *Gentleman's Magazine*, April, 1762, A Short Narrative, 1762.

<sup>19</sup> Proceedings, 1768: 244-256.

<sup>20</sup> TS 11 2696 Box 818.

<sup>21</sup> Proceedings, July 1768: 274.

<sup>22</sup> St James' Chronicle, 14-17 May 1768, Franklin to Joseph Galloway, London May 14, 1768, in Franklin vol. 5, 1907: 134-50

<sup>23</sup> On the movement and use of this ritual by diverse groups, see chapter 6.

<sup>24</sup> Journeyman committees among Dublin weavers had 'sworn' non-Dublin journeyman and women 'out of the trade' (Henry, 1994: 61). This suggests the multiple routes of the use of oaths as part of political organisation, but also how they could perform exclusions within subaltern groups. For the militant action of Irish weavers in London in 1768 see Rudé, 1952: 256.

<sup>25</sup> Thanks to Dr Peter Gray for suggesting this link.

<sup>26</sup> Cited by Rediker, 1988: 11.

<sup>27</sup> The relationship between the registry office project and the regulation of 'the rude Behaviour and insolence of Servants of all kinds' is made even more explicit in a flyer about the office appended to Henry Fielding's treatise on 'the late increase of robbers' (Fielding, 1988 [1751]: 173, George, 1929: 587)

<sup>28</sup> On this networked corruption see Wilson, 1995: 292, George, 1927: 234, Morgan and Rushton, 1998: 17. This networked interest was active in the opposition to the 1758 act Masters and owners of ships in Whitby, Scarborough, Newcastle, Sunderland, Yarmouth and other ports collaborated in petitions against the bill, *Journal of House of Commons*, 1758, 29<sup>th</sup> May (hereafter J.H.C.).

<sup>29</sup> (Coal Heavers, 1764). An observer of 1765 emphasised the organisational coherence of the Newcastle pitmen through noting that they were not 'a rabble of Coal heavers' (Levine and Wrightson, 1991: 425).

<sup>30</sup> (An Impartial Bystander, 1754: 5-6). The undertaker was to be their sole employer and they were 'intitled to no money or consideration if [...] taken ill or lame' (ibid., 1754: 5-6).

<sup>31</sup> (The Case of Francis Reynolds, 1764).

<sup>32</sup> (An Impartial Bystander, 1754: 7-8). For Hodgson see below.

<sup>33</sup> Cited in J.H.C., May 30<sup>th</sup> 1758.

<sup>34</sup> J.H.C., June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1758.

<sup>35</sup> J.H.C., May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1758.

<sup>36</sup> J.H.C., June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1758.

<sup>37</sup> J.H.C., June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1758.

<sup>38</sup> Corruption was exacerbated by the different measures of coals which varied geographically and were not uniformly practised or enforced (Linebaugh, 1992: 307, Colquhoun, 1800: 159). For an account of the fraudulent practices in the coal trade and their relation to these diverse 'weights and measures' see Frauds and Abuses of the Coal Dealers Detected, 1747: 8.

<sup>39</sup> Repertories of the Court of Alderman, vol. cxl fols 405, 435. 'The Vat was a flat-bottomed vessel, round in shape, and smaller at the top than at the bottom; its dimensions were prescribed by legislation [...]. Though 'heaped' measure was required, no indication was given as to the size of the heap' (Ashton and Sykes, 1964: 207)

<sup>40</sup> Repertories of the Court of Alderman, vol. cxli fol. 54.

<sup>41</sup> Linebaugh documents three coal heavers who were hung for pilfering coals in the mid eighteenth century (Linebaugh, 1992: 307). Rebecca Hart a poor woman who stole coals told the magistrate 'it was no sin in the Poor to rob the Rich' (Linebaugh, 1992: 308). Techniques of pilfering were practised by a wide constituency of Atlantic maritime workers including African-American maritime workers who used their positions to 'nourish slaves illicit market in stolen goods' (Bolster, 1998: 23).

<sup>42</sup> Thieving and pilfering were central themes of Arthur Young's account of the labouring poor in Ireland in his tour in the mid 1770s (see Young, 1892, vol. 1: 60, 64, 68, 99, 109, 175, 238, 429, 455).

<sup>43</sup> The growth in volume of coal being transported in the eighteenth century was significant. According to Ashton and Sykes in 1700 London imported 335,000 Chaldrons of coal, by 1768 this had risen to 614,000 (Ashton and Sykes, 1764: 249-50).

<sup>44</sup> An act for the relief of the coal heavers working upon the River Thames and for enabling them to make a provision for such of themselves as shall be sick, lame or past their labour and for their widows and orphans. 31 Geo. II c. 76 consulted at House of Lords Record Office.

<sup>45</sup> (Linebaugh, 1992: 313).

<sup>46</sup> TS 11/ 2696 Box 818. As an advocate of the coal heavers he incurred the intimidation of the undertakers and their corrupt magistrates: 'for more than 20 years' he was 'perplexed, harassed and distress'd by the Coal Undertakers' (An Impartial Bystander, 1754, The Case of Francis Reynolds, 1764). His conviction for fraud should be viewed in this context, though it is of course important to leave open the possibility that he was guilty.

<sup>47</sup> On the techniques of coal-whipping see George, 1927: 229, Linebaugh, 1992: 311.

<sup>48</sup> He headed a parade of the mainly Irish coal heavers on St Patrick's Day, 1768 with a green herb called a 'shamrogge in his hat'. His fellow magistrates used this as evidence to dismiss him, see Middlesex Sessions Papers 1768 Sept. 47 a-d, Hodgson, 1768: 32-42.

<sup>49</sup> This situation differs from earlier disputes in the eighteenth century where Irish labour was used to undercut English wages which was one cause of anti-Irish riots in Shoreditch in 1736 see Rude, 1952: 201-221, George, 1925: 124.

<sup>50</sup> The Solicitor General estimated the coal-heavers were two thirds Irish, see above. Of the seven coal heavers convicted of the assault on Green's tavern six were Catholic and one was protestant (Rudé, 1952: 252n126).

<sup>51</sup> For accounts of these events see Proceedings, 1768: 244-56.

<sup>52</sup> Sir John Fielding reporting a meeting with 'some of the older coal heavers' in June 1768 noted they had 'been tossed about between undertakers, register office and other interested agents greatly to their injury', Fielding, June 10th 1768 *Home Office Domestic Entry Book*.

<sup>53</sup> *Public Advertiser* 21 July 1768.

<sup>54</sup> On the organising practices of sailors see Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 214-221, Rediker, 1988: 205-253.

<sup>55</sup> Domestic Entry Book of the Home Office for May 9th 1768: 80.

<sup>56</sup> See Proceedings, 1768: 247.

<sup>57</sup> There are a number of sources which suggest the ambivalence of the riverside labourers towards Wilkes. Lord Weymouth noted on May 6th 1768 the sailors' cry for 'redress and seem to disclaim Wilkes' (Correspondence of King George III, 192 : 616). The slogan 'No Wilkes! No King!' was reputed to have been heard among the 'mob' who assembled on St George's Fields on 10th May along with the expression 'this is the most glorious opportunity for a revolution ever offered' (British Library Add Ms 30884 folios 72-3). One of the problems involved in evaluating the strength or persuasiveness of such opinions is that there is frequent reference in the press and official correspondence to 'audacious treasonable papers', see for example *Berrow's Worcester Journal* (hereafter, BWJ) May 19th, 1768. These sources tend to make no reference to what treasonable papers actually said, a testament to the unrepresentability of anti-monarchist sedition.

<sup>58</sup> Beckford constructed a 'sense of the people' which did not mean the mob nor the top, but the middling people who had a 'right [...] to interfere in the condition and conduct of the nation' (cited by Sheldon, 1992: 19). On the term motley and New York rioters' arguments for 'motley government as well as motley subjects' see Linebaugh and Reidker, 2000: 174-6, 211-214.

<sup>59</sup> On the interconnections between this event and American sailors' radicalism see Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 221. The sailor and slave Briton Hammon who 'wrote the first voyage account published by a Black American' spent time in London in the 1750s and was involved in 'dock work' (Hammon, [1760] 1971: 522-528, Bolster, 1998: 9). Many of London's 10-20,000 strong black population were congregated in riverside parishes like Ratcliff and Limehouse (Fryer, 1984: 75). On Russian labourers in eighteenth century dockyards in England, see Cross, 1980: 146-173. On the strike actions of prostitutes see Shelton, 1973:5. George suggests possible interconnections between prostitutes and coal-heavers: the wife of a coal heaver was recorded in the Old Bailey Sessions papers as keeping an 'apparently disreputable' lodging house (George, 1925: 425). One of the arguments made about the coal heavers' low pay was that they were unable to support their 'large families'. The result being that 'mothers must and are of necessity compelled to wander, and be drove about the Country a-begging or stealing or both and consequently become an almost inconceivable burthen both to themselves and the whole community' (An Impartial Bystander, 1754: 7-8). Despite its horror at the economic/ petty criminal activity of women this pamphlet is certainly suggestive that coal heavers were part of a gender division of labour which might involve support strategies such as prostitution. The Irish were the group most commonly associated with prostitution in eighteenth century London (Henderson, 1999: 18-19).

<sup>60</sup> On Wilkes' anti-Scots rhetoric see Colley, 1992: 105-117.

<sup>61</sup> M.Redknapp writing on order of the Deputy Governor committee of Hudson's Bay to Lord Weymouth on 13th May 1768, Home Office Domestic entry book: 96-7.

<sup>62</sup> B.L. Add Ms 32990, folios 107-8, May 19th 1768.

<sup>63</sup> For a discussion of the politics of the 'colour bar' at the Cowley Morris plant see Ward, Stuart and Syngedouw, 1994: 81-82. Williams presented the South Wales labour politics in relation to which he honed the term 'militant particularism' as defined by local bonds, although they were the site of multiple interconnections (Williams, 1989: 241-2). Early South Wales labour militants, for example, drew on 'practices of rural solidarity' associated with West Wales such as the Ceffyl Pren or Wooden Horse (Gwyn A.Williams, 1988: 29, 77-78). These ritualised forms of intimidation were used against 'outsiders', including Irish immigrant labour (O'Leary, 2000: 39-41, 150).

<sup>64</sup> Proceedings, July 1768: 244-256.

<sup>65</sup> Proceedings, July 1768: 271.

<sup>66</sup> Proceedings, July 1768: 264-274.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>68</sup> See chapter 5, below.

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<sup>69</sup> ICC/Discussions/8-27/5/1999.

<sup>70</sup> ICC/Discussions/19-20/6/1999.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Friend-Enemy Relations and the Construction of Maps of Grievance**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The final section of chapter 4 illustrated that diverse alternative spatial imaginations are being mobilised against neo-liberal globalisation. It argued that the bounded, nationalist and particularist forms of politics mobilised by some of the participants in the ICC placed stresses on the solidarities produced through the Caravan. This suggests that the spatial practices of political activity have effects on the forms of solidarity that are crafted through activity. This chapter develops this engagement with the spatial imaginations and practices mobilised and produced through political activity. It examines what it might mean to think spatially Carl Schmitt's argument that the formation of friend-enemy groupings is a central part of a definition of the political (Schmitt, 1963). I use the friend-enemy distinction here to explore the dynamics through which antagonisms are constructed. The chapter engages with the ways 'environmentalisms of the poor' have contested dominant power-geometries, and have articulated as enemies those groups who have produced social and environmental relations in unequal ways. The chapter also argues that the spatial practices through which these friend-enemy relations are articulated and defined have effects on the character of the identities and agency produced through their activity.

These are important theoretical questions for the thesis. Examining how spatial practices constitute political identities and how political activity reconfigures spatial relations is central to the approach to identity and agency that is adopted here. Movements like the Inter-Continental Caravan are defined by articulating 'friend-enemy relations' through diverse spatial practices of resistance. This is partly because the power relations that these movements contest spill out of the confining structures of the nation-state and are not being dealt with adequately by many Western and non-Western political systems. These practices, through which political movements construct wider power relations as hostile and contestable, are constitutive of the political action the movements engage in. In this discussion these spatial practices through which friend-enemy relations are defined and engaged with are described as the construction of 'maps of grievance.' The old word 'grievance' is used to denote that these are processes of imagining and experiencing wider power relations rather than engagements with a static map of power.

For actors craft their political identities and engagements through engaging with wider power relations rather than having fixed interests constituted in relation to already existing spatial configurations of power. These engagements with wider power relations are not



spontaneous or arbitrary. They are crafted in relation to histories and geographies of action which have made power relations contestable through drawing on specific imaginations of power and versions of alternative orders. The chapter argues that the formation of 'maps of grievance' and the dragging of wider power relations into the 'terrain of contestation' are key spatial practices through which 'environmentalisms of the poor' have contested unequal social and environmental relations. Spatial relations are also reconstituted through the way these maps of grievance are constructed. Changes in the ways maps of grievance are imagined can permit the formation of different networks of political activity and alliances.

This chapter draws on Mouffe's innovative reading of the legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt.<sup>1</sup> Mouffe (1993, 1999a, 1999b, 2000) leads a critical invocation of the importance of Schmitt's placing of the formation of friend-enemy groupings at the centre of a definition of the political. In the wake of claims of 'the end of politics', Schmitt's insistence that conflict is something that liberal democracy exteriorises gives rise to pertinent and 'hard questions' (Hirst, 1999: 8). Mouffe follows Schmitt in placing conflict and power relations at the centre of a discussion of the political (Mouffe, 1999a, 1999b). My concern here is to examine the practices through which movements make wider spatialised power relations part of the terrain of contestation. This process of making power relations contestable is part of the ongoing conduct of political struggles, and is constitutive of their own productive power relations. This focus on activity dislocates the purified, human subject adopted by Mouffe and Schmitt. It enables the formation of maps of grievance to be formed through negotiating how collectives of humans and non humans are generated and ordered. The chapter concludes that the insights of Schmitt and Mouffe are helpful in engaging with attempts to theorise the politics of collectives of unlike actors.

## **5.2 The conditions of possibility of an equivalence: the changing maps of grievance of the Indian New Farmers Movements**

Professor Nanjundaswamy, leader of the KRRS, wrote in a communiqué publicising the KRRS's campaign to cremate Monsanto's field trials of genetically modified cotton in India that:

We know that stopping biotechnology in India will not be of much help to us if it continues in other countries, since the threats that it poses do not stop at her borders. We also think that the kind of actions that will be going on in India have the potential not only to kick

those corporate killers out of our country; if we play our cards right at global level and co-ordinate our work, these actions can also pose a major challenge to the survival of these corporations in the stock markets.

(Nanjundaswamy, 1998, circulated widely on e-mail networks)

Nanjundaswamy's communiqué envisions the solidarities between different activists struggling against biotechnology as potentially productive. It defines these solidarities as emerging through shared action against capitalist biotechnology and the key institutions shaping and producing neoliberal forms of globalisation, especially the WTO (Nanjundaswamy, 1998). The account, through its references to the role of 'corporate killers', intertwines contestation of unequal power relations with a denunciation of particular techniques for modifying living things. These solidarities are also defined through positive relations with other struggles against bio-technology and through practices which generate seeds as part of unofficial networks of exchange, rather than as patented commodities (Sahai, 1993, 2000).

Nanjundaswamy's communiqué and images of the Cremate Monsanto! action were circulated widely among activist networks throughout Europe and were the kinds of inspirational action that fed into the formation of the Caravan project. The way Nanjundaswamy hails other activists as part of a common contestation of biotechnology and neo-liberal globalisation is part of the ongoing process of shaping the kinds of international alliances that came together in the Caravan. It is through projects like the Caravan that People's Global Action, the loose grouping of many 'grassroots movements' which includes the KRRS, have adopted an innovative approach to shaping the solidarities formed in opposition to neo-liberal globalisation. They have experimented with forms of solidarity which produce and generate joint actions between movements from different political traditions. This is an attempt to produce rhizomorphic, routed and productive practices of solidarity rather than the rigid tree-like version handed down through traditions such as the socialist internationals.<sup>2</sup> These rhizomorphic solidarities produce routed forms of action which tend to work against the formation of fixed, organisational hierarchies.<sup>3</sup> These forms of equivalences and alliances between unlike actors refuse what Spivak has termed 'a homogeneous internationalism' (Spivak, 1985: 350). Their activity is productive, continually formed and can unsettle fixed identities.

While Nanjundaswamy's communiqué hails other struggles as part of the same movement, it is also significant that an understated Indian nationalism is reworked here. This is produced through his invocation of the threats of biotechnology 'not stopping at

her borders'. Nanjundaswamy's articulation of the KRRS's resistance to Monsanto as part of a transnational movement only partially unsettles the Indian nationalist identities mobilised through the previous activity of the KRRS. This partial unsettling of Indian nationalist identities had effects on the solidarities and equivalences generated through the Caravan. This section argues that the changing political action of the Indian New Farmers' Movements was an important context for the solidarities produced through the conduct of the Caravan. It argues that changes in the imagination of the maps of grievance formed through the activity of movements like the KRRS were a condition of possibility of the formation of equivalences through the ICC. The section also argues that the nationalist imaginations that have been used to shape and articulate the KRRS's maps of grievance were only partially disrupted through the KRRS's integration into transnational political alliances.

KRRS's high profile actions against Monsanto appealed directly to the practices used to contest bio-technology by activists in the UK and other parts of Western Europe. The forms of solidarity that were produced through the ICC were generated through shared involvement in particular practices of confrontational, non violent direct action (PGA, 1999a). The KRRS have been part of the translation of Gandhian practices of disobedience to contemporary struggles in the Indian countryside. Through invoking Gandhian action the KRRS have drawn not only on one of the most legitimate repertoires of Indian political activity, but also on one of the internationally renowned forms of non-violent direct action.<sup>4</sup> Their use of 'direct action' has enabled them to become part of intersections of multiple trajectories of resistance to neo-liberal globalisation. The political activity of the KRRS is also an intervention in the directions of the Indian New Farmers' Movements.

The activity of the KRRS in contesting transnational power-geometries and institutions like the *World Trade Organisation* is part of an intervention in the political identities and imaginations of power of the Indian New Farmers' movements. The New Farmers' Movements came to prominence in the 1970s and 80s. They attempted to redraw the lines of political antagonism in rural India through mobilising a distinction between the countryside or '*Bharat*' and a corrupt and exploitative urban India (Brass, 1995a, Bentall and Corbridge, 1996). As Omvedt argues, '[r]ather than organising wage-earners against property owning employers they have organised entire village communities against the state' (Omvedt, 1995: 126). These movements have drawn on the practices and idioms of Gandhian mass action and on powerful symbolic narratives which celebrate an authentic Gandhian Indian countryside where the village is the appropriate unit of

political organisation. Nanjundaswamy has referred to the movement both as a 'village movement' and as 'a movement for independence' (Krishnarajulu, 1986: 31). These movements are uneven and differentiated. The support of some movements such as the Bharatia Kisan Union in Uttar Pradesh are drawn predominantly from particular caste constituencies (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996).

This articulation of rural antagonisms has been produced through non violent methods of agitation used to symbolise 'the delinking of country-city links'. The methods used to produce and articulate these maps of grievance include 'the *rasta roko* (blocking roads or cutting the links between city and village) and the *gavbandi* (forbidding politicians and bureaucrats from entering villages)' (Omvedt, 1995: 126-7). These spatial practices have been mobilised to control the networks and mobilities intersecting in these villages. They have also been mobilised to create the whole village as the constituency of movements like the KRRS, rather than just farmers (Krishnarajulu, 1986: 31). These practices have had effects in terms of the everyday relations of peasants. For example, deferential practices in relation to outside officials have been eroded (Krishnarajulu, 1986: 31).

The maps of grievance constructed through the action of the KRRS have also contested the power relations that structure resource and land use. In 1982 the KRRS led mass mobilisations over granite quarrying in Bangalore district. Thousands of peasants blockaded roads to 'prevent local resources being indiscriminately looted on grossly unequal terms' (Suresh, 1986: 167). In the early 1980s the KRRS agitated against the extensive planting of Eucalyptus trees which had been planted with the aid of the World Bank. This saw 'the destruction of *lakhs* [hundreds of thousands] of seedlings of Eucalyptus in nurseries'. This agitation began to develop into a more general drive against social forestry (Suresh, *ibid.*). These mass actions around granite and eucalyptus touched on wider power geometries through contesting the role of the World Bank. More recent actions have been directly constituted through strategies which drag the wider power geometries constituted by institutions like the World Trade Organisation into the 'terrain of political contestation'. This strategy was developed through the high-profile assaults on Cargill seed factories and Kentucky Fried Chicken Outlets which were noted in chapter 3. The assault on Monsanto's field trials was explicitly linked to struggles against the WTO (Nanjundaswamy, 1998).

This contestation of wider power geometries has produced, and been produced through, 'maps of grievance' which target key neo-liberal political projects such as the Dunkel Draft of the Uruguay round of GATT. This suggests how the articulation of friend-enemy relations can be continually formed through activity. The KRRS's

vociferous opposition to the Dunkel Draft of the GATT, however, was itself a deeply contested strategy. Bentall has described the 'Dunkel Draft as a likely sea change in the future of agricultural politics of India, bringing farmers into conflict with the interests of multi-national capital' (Bentall, 1995: 269). This change has been articulated in very different ways by farmers' movements leaders. Sharad Joshi, the leader of the Maharashtra based Shetkari Sanghatana, supported the Dunkel Draft arguing that 'the interests of the Multi-National Corporations and the farmers coincide' (Joshi, interview with Bentall, 1995: 298). But alliances were formed through opposition to the Dunkel Draft between Mahendra Singh Tikait of the BKU Uttar Pradesh, Nanjundaswamy of KRRS and the BKU Punjab (Assadi, 1995a: 194).

The Caravan was a further anti market intervention in the articulation of the Farmers Movements' maps of grievance. It drew on the alliances formed in opposition to the Dunkel Draft and was defined against Farmers' leaders like Joshi who had supported liberalisation of trade. At a press conference given before the Caravan left India Nanjundaswamy made it clear that 'Sharad Joshi was not part of the group because he was insufficiently anti-market' (*Economic Times* 24-5-1999). This opposition to the position of Joshi was also made clear to me by an activist from a rival movement to the Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra which is hostile to Joshi's pro-market line.<sup>5</sup> The Caravan also continued to shape resistance to the pressure exerted by neo-liberal institutions on 'traditional' farming practices.

The opposition of the KRRS to neo-liberal projects like the Dunkel Draft was articulated through opposing the way they envision the control and regulation of seeds. The KRRS organised mass mobilisations such as the 'seed satyagraha'<sup>6</sup> in Bangalore on October 2nd 1993, attended by a *lakh* (a hundred thousand) of farmers. Speakers at the rally argued that the proposals of the Dunkel Draft to allow private companies to patent seeds 'would have devastating effects on their livelihoods in general and on their control of seeds in particular' (Rane, 1993: 2391). A declaration read out at the rally argued:

We do not recognise intellectual property rights on biological materials being granted to companies for their private profits. The knowledge on which crops to plant and on which seeds to use was evolved by generations of farmers and not by the corporations. Therefore we do not accept that they have a right to profit from our knowledge and our experience. Instead, we adhere to the concept of common property rights, where the right to seeds cannot be owned by private companies. Seeds should be allowed to be exchanged freely among farmers in the country and the world, as has been the practice till now.

(cited by Wishvas Rane, 1993: 2391).

The opposition to the proposals of patenting seeds in the Dunkel Draft was articulated through a defence and mobilisation of unofficial practices of exchange. The declaration emphasises that the seeds are more than just fixed, material goods. It articulates the importance and histories of the right to craft and intervene in practices which produce seeds as part of unofficial exchanges between farmers. It also suggests that farmers produce distinctive identities in relation to these practices and that pride is produced through the skill and knowledges crafted in relation to these non humans. This pride and independence is articulated by the KRRS as being threatened by attempts to patent seeds (Assadi, 1995a: 197).

This emphasis on the ways farmers are part of relations which generate seeds through practices of unofficial exchange contrasts starkly with the purified imagination of property relations mobilised through the Dunkel Draft. The Dunkel Draft produces static non humans as the property of private companies. This produces a purified imagination of what constitutes property relations. In this text, structured by the polarities of what Latour describes as the modern constitution, non humans are divided up as the property of specific (Western) companies.<sup>7</sup> The tone of the KRRS's opposition to the Dunkel Draft suggests that alternative forms of politics can mobilise and ratify unofficial ethical practices which have been constituted by what Latour describes as arrangement and combination (Latour, 1993: 45). These ethical practices mix up the domains which are separated by the modern constitution. This opposition to the patenting of seeds situates the seeds as 'already hybrid', as part of differentiated histories and geographies which have generated the seeds through unofficial exchanges and 'common property rights'. These political practices mobilise and generate maps of grievance which contest the spatially constructed power relations shaping new and unequal practices of regulating seeds. But the ways the regulation and power relations generating seeds were mobilised provoked some unsettling identifications.

The opposition to the Dunkel Draft was a site of connections between the KRRS and a wide network of organizations and intellectuals who were integrated into transnational routes of resistance. These included internationally renowned figures like Dr Vandana Shiva (Assadi, 1995b: 193). But there were other influences on how these 'maps of grievances' were articulated. 'Peasants' who attended the rally against the Dunkel Draft in Bangalore argued:

Our leaders have said that the foreign paper [Dunkel draft] is an evil design to sell Mother India to foreigners. For a Kisan [farmer/ peasant] the life support are his land, seed and plough. If the Rao government sells these to the foreigners what will happen to the national pride [...]

(Cited by Brass, 1995: 56n41).

Here the Kisan's land, seed and plough are articulated as 'his' 'life support'. They are also explicitly articulated to a version of Indian nationalism where the 'national pride' depends on the Kisan's relations with his 'land, seed and plough'. The contestation of patenting of seeds, here, becomes articulated through maps of grievance formed in opposition to generalised foreign others. The maps of grievance being mobilised by the KRRS could refigure nationalist identities through pitting rural India against hostile foreign forces. This may close down the possibilities of forming opposition to the Dunkel Draft in relation to non-Indian struggles against the institutions and practices of neo-liberal globalisation. Indeed, these trajectories of nationalist opposition to neo-liberal globalisation had effects on the conduct of the ICC.

The way the maps of grievance of the KRRS defined as enemies the institutions and practices of neo-liberalism was a condition of possibility of the KRRS's involvement in the Caravan. Despite the ICC being characterised by attempts to form solidarities between diverse groups struggling against globalisation the nationalist imaginaries of the Farmers' Movements were only very partially unsettled through the planning of the Caravan project. The Farmers' Movement's quite nationalist 'maps of grievance' exerted pressure on the solidarities conducted through the ICC. One of the ways these tensions emerged was through the diverse effects of the Gandhian idioms of the political activity of the KRRS on the conduct and organisation of the ICC.

The internationalist legacies of Gandhian non violent action enabled some of the equivalences formed through the ICC to be formed.<sup>8</sup> The KRRS's action is very much an intervention in Gandhian forms of politics. Their actions against multinationals have shaped and been underpinned by a theory and practice of 'Gandhian violence' (Assadi, 1995a, 1996). This 'Gandhian violence' is based on 'an analysis of the adversary' and demands that peasants 'should attack only lifeless property and not loot the destroyed property' (Assadi, 1996: 1186). These assertive forms of non-violent direct action appealed to a constituency of Western direct activists, who had experimented with similar definitions of non-violent action which included the destruction of legitimised targets of 'lifeless property'. Through these acts the KRRS have creatively reworked some of the

political practices of the Gandhian political tradition. But legacies of this tradition which were more contested through the Caravan project were also reworked by the KRRS.

Firstly, the KRRS and other farmers' movements such as the BKU have mobilised a Gandhian version of the 'village' which downplays inequalities and power relations within the countryside (Assadi, 1995a). Bentall has demonstrated that the BKU in western Uttar Pradesh have mobilised a specific constituency of Jat caste, middle peasants, and has tended to be held in suspicion by both wealthier and poorer members of rural communities (Bentall, 1995). The BKU leader Mahendra Singh Tikait is the leader of the second most powerful Jat Hindu clan in Western Uttar Pradesh (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 32). The activity of some members of the BKU has also involved intimidation and even murder of Harijan labourers involved in the Mazdoor Union (labourers union) in western Uttar Pradesh (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 41, see also Lerche, 1999: 192). Lindberg argues that Farmers' Movements are 'dominated by an emerging agrarian bourgeoisie of rich peasants and capitalist farmers which mobilise part of the middle peasantry with a rhetoric that hides their real intentions' (Lindberg, 1995: 119, see also Brass, 1995a: 18).

Omvedt argues against this dismissal of the Farmers' Movements. She argues it is wrong to assume *a priori* that the demands they make are only in the interests of this narrow section of the middle peasantry (Omvedt, 1995: 128). She argues that 'the real agrarian capitalist is not the 20 acre farmer hiring labour to seek the standard of living of a low-grade bank employee, but the agro-businessman marketing seeds and fertiliser' (Omvedt, 1991: 2288). There are also histories of political parties/ movements in India mobilising diverse rural political constituencies. Duncan argues that the strategy of the Lok Dal party before 1985 in Uttar Pradesh successfully brought together 'the diverse interests of different castes, of different regions, and of peasants and farmers deriving very different levels of benefit from participation in agricultural development' through 'articulating new interests and aspirations' (Duncan, 1997: 265). But there remain tensions within the ways that the Farmers' Movements engage with rural inequality that are partly suppressed due to the kinds of Gandhian constructions of the village mobilised through their political activity. As chapter 3 argued, some of these constructions of the undivided Indian countryside became relationally constituted and reproduced through the rhetoric and activity of the ICC. But there was also contestation of these inequalities with some Western activists expressing anger that farmers from Gujarat involved in the Caravan were campaigning against a ceiling on the size of land holdings.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, the anti-urbanism of Gandhian thought and action pervasively structures



these movements.<sup>10</sup> The undifferentiated version of the countryside they mobilise emerges from this anti-urbanism. It locates the sources of inequality outside of the countryside. Movements like MST have actively campaigned against the way that 'the vested economic interests of multinational corporations' must be challenged so as 'to advance and consolidate the democratization of wealth and power in the countryside' (MST, 2001: 157). But these connections between outside interrelations and inequalities within the countryside are not brought to the fore in the rhetoric of the Indian Farmers' Movements (see Assadi, 1995b). This anti-urbanism had effects on the organisational structure of the ICC. A powerful constituency of Indian urban political movements including movements organising slum dwellers in Delhi and against Union Carbide were active in the globally coordinated actions against the World Trade Organisation on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1999. But urban movements were absent from the sizeable Indian contingent of the Caravan.

Thirdly, a powerful legacy of Gandhian political action is the construction of charismatic leaders within the New Farmers' Movements. The leadership styles of Nanjundaswamy of the KRRS and Mahendra Singh Tikait of the BKU are constituted in relation to histories of male, charismatic 'non-leaders' within the Gandhian mould (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 42). Their conduct has affinities with the way that Gandhi defined political utopia as 'a patriarchy in which the ruler, by his moral quality and habitual adherence to truth, always expresses the collective will', rather than through advocating 'participation by every member of the polity' (Chatterjee, 1984: 165). This construction of leadership is related to the Gandhian construction of Truth as universal, unchanging and outside of history (Chatterjee, 1984: 167). Charisma, as Weber suggested, depends for its reproduction on the recognition of authority (Weber, 1968: 242). The recognition demanded by charismatic leadership is relationally constituted and continually formed rather than simply flowing from the innate qualities of leaders.<sup>11</sup>

Understanding how this recognition is continually formed is important. Leaders like Nanjundaswamy and Tikait have only been partially successful in reproducing their legitimacy and the legitimacy of their movements. Bentall's (1995) field work in Western Uttar Pradesh in the early 1990s suggested that BKU members were increasingly suspicious of and for the first time becoming actively hostile to the leadership of Tikait. Lerche argues that, by the mid 1990s, the BKU in Uttar Pradesh had disintegrated (Lerche, 1999: 216). The KRRS's strategy of Gandhian violence has lost them support in the countryside, and there was active opposition by some Karnataka farmers to the Cremate Monsanto! action (Assadi, 1996: 1186, Panini, 1998: 2169, see also Omvedt's critique of the action, Omvedt, 1998). (Nanjundaswamy's poor showing in the 1999

parliamentary election in his Karnataka constituency is also suggestive of this crisis of support.) The flirtation of Farmers' Movements with electoral strategies, including the BKU's brief alliance with the Hindu nationalist BJP, have led to a loss of legitimacy (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 44, see also Mukherij, 1998). This strategy has made it more difficult for these movements to clearly differentiate themselves from established political processes. *The Hindustan Times* of 24<sup>th</sup> May 1999 argued that the farmers were taking the struggle to Europe through the Inter-Continental Caravan, having failed to halt economic liberalisation at home. This interpretation of the Caravan and the legitimisation crisis of their movements suggests that the increasing international strategy of the Nanjundaswamy-Tikait grouping can be read as a strategy of re-invention as well as a tracing of and contestation of the power relations of neo-liberalism.

This strategy depended on recognition of their legitimacy, and the legitimacy of their movements, by the diverse Western European green and social justice activists involved in the Caravan. These alliances were established through the changing friend-enemy relations established through the activity of Farmers' Movements like the KRRS. The next section examines how the formation of these equivalences was negotiated through the Caravan. It argues that the histories of the Farmers' Movement's political activity mattered and had effects. But it also argues that productive tensions emerged through the formation of equivalences through the Caravan.

### **5.3 The Construction of Maps of Grievance and the Formation of Friend-Enemy Identifications**

The ethic of political friendship which emerged from the support networks of the Zapatistas produced attempts to generate solidarities through shared actions against the practices and institutions of neo-liberal globalisation. These solidarities were to be decentralised and characterised by confrontational, non-violent direct action. The formation of the semi-organisational apparatus of People's Global Action was part of an ongoing attempt to formalise some of these alliances and to draw them together into a more defined, collective project. The Caravan was one of the first major projects convened by PGA, which in 1999 played an important role in the demonstrations against the WTO in Seattle. Transforming the unofficial alliances and friendships into a more defined and productive organisational process through the Caravan was contested and difficult. These processes suggest how the friend-enemy relations that defined the Caravan were not given,

but were constructed and contested through the activity and organisation of the project. This section also argues that these processes of the formation and negotiation of equivalences were productive.

The KRRS had built a reputation among European activist networks as a formidable and innovative mass organisation and movement. This had been achieved through the widespread circulation of images and reports of the 'laughing arsonists' torching of Monsanto's trial fields of genetically modified cotton in Karnataka. This action consolidated their reputation for formidable direct action formed through earlier widely publicised actions against Cargill seed factories and Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets. The imagery of their actions was used by activists such as London based *Reclaim the Streets* (RTS). RTS publicity for the June 18th action in the City in 1999 used a photo montage of a large mobilisation of Indian Farmers cut so that they appeared to be marching through the centre of the City of London. The KRRS was seen by London activists as an organisation with its 'credentials intact' (Townes, 1999).

This recognition and identification with the KRRS emerged most strongly from common involvement in non-violent direct actions against biotechnology. The London Welcoming Committee was predominantly drawn from a constituency of activists involved in the London based group *Reclaim the Streets* (RTS) and wider campaigns against genetic modification and biotechnology. These campaigns had utilised forms of direct action, such as the destruction of test sites of genetically modified crops. KRRS's actions had been an important source of inspiration to many resistance movements against biotechnology and there was excitement at the possibility of working with these Indian activists. Common enemies emerged through these actions, as both KRRS and European direct activists became involved in actions against Monsanto and institutions like the WTO. The emergence of these common enemies was part of changes in the maps of grievance of London based activists as well as those of Indian movements. RTS had shaped an increasingly anti-neo-liberal political imagination which contrasted strongly with some of the more directly anti-state imaginations prevalent in some of the early struggles of the anti-roads movement. KRRS's involvement in practices of direct action was crucial in giving it legitimacy among wider activist networks. This differentiated its political practices from the Indian non-governmental organisation sector which was discussed in very hostile terms in the London Welcoming Committee meetings. One activist with experience of Nepali alternative politics described the Indian NGO sector as 'basically corrupt'.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the existence of substantial identification with, and support for, the KRRS,

forming alliances and joint actions with them was a contested process. Tensions around the style of Nanjundaswamy's leadership emerged through the ongoing, organisational work of the London Welcoming Committee. The hierarchical style of his leadership was disliked by many activists in the London group, who almost all came out of a politics which was deeply hostile to and suspicious of formal, organised hierarchies. But it was Nanjundaswamy's conduct, as much as his formal position as leader of KRRS, which was contested. He acted as the only mediating point between Indian movements and the different European Welcoming Committees. It was Nanjundaswamy who accessed KRRS's email and discussed aspects of the organisation of the Caravan by phone with European activists. It was Nanjundaswamy who put pressure on calls from the Dutch Welcoming Committee to downsize the project so as to make it more manageable (Do or Die, 1999: 29).

The contestations over how shared political action should be made with the KRRS were often carried out in a fractious and bitter manner. They produced, and intersected with, uneasy tensions in the meetings, tensions which were often exacerbated by poor organisation.<sup>13</sup> One of the most forceful personalities within the group attempted to close down discussion of the questions over the nature of the KRRS and the conduct of Swamy<sup>14</sup> and difficulties over procuring visas. He felt that people coming to the meetings questioning the political credentials of KRRS and asking about the Indians' politics were obstructive. He argued there was more important and pressing organisational work to be done. He argued that it wasn't our role to evaluate the actions of the Indians and it was almost racist to contest what the Indians were doing. In later meetings when the Caravan was about to leave for Europe he played on a particular image of Swamy as 'this poor, overworked old man' getting up early to travel round India gathering up people for the Caravan.<sup>15</sup> Some of this rhetoric and imagery suggests the influence of the orientalism of much 'hippy' culture on how these alliances were imagined.<sup>16</sup>

Others in the group were more critical of Swamy. They argued that he was overworked precisely because of his refusal to delegate responsibility within the organisation. At one meeting there was an attempt to use problems over the obtaining of visas for the KRRS to completely re-shape the project. Proposals were made to quickly try and construct a smaller project drawn from movements such as Movimento Sem Terra and small Nepali movements which would bypass the Indian New Farmers Movements. Activists argued this re-orientation would make the project more plural as it would be less dominated by Indian movements and that it would mean there was not 'a control freak like Swamy' at the centre of it.<sup>17</sup> This hostility to Swamy suggests that he failed to relationally reconstitute

his charismatic authority through involvement in transnational activist networks. The impossibility of completely reorienting the project in the two months before it happened, however, suggests that arguments in favour of concentrating on organising the project as it was were far more pragmatic.

These proposals for a change in the orientation of the project emerged from an attempt to deal with the two main lines of contestation that emerged through the organisational process. Firstly, the unequal gender division that was proposed for the Indian delegation of the Caravan: women were making up less than a quarter of the 400 strong delegation. Secondly, Nanjundaswamy's insistence that the Caravan had to have at least 400 participants drawn from Indian movements. Tensions about the unequal gender composition of the caravan were raised by many involved in the project. These included an activist who had recently returned from making a video in India about actions against genetic engineering. She had taken out a list of questions to ask Swamy to help clarify organisational issues about the movements that would make up the Indian contingent of the Caravan and about the Caravan's gender composition. But rather than gaining accurate and complete answers she was frustrated with what she saw as an unpleasant evasiveness of Swamy. She argued he had been 'refusing to answer' questions about the composition of the Caravan.<sup>18</sup>

Her anger intersected with difficulties in getting enough material together from KRRS to make the project viable. One of the activists who had provided space for the Welcoming Meetings at Strike, commented at an evaluation of the project in late October, that the main problem with the project was 'the lack of information coming from India'.<sup>19</sup> This lack of exchange of information had two main impacts. Firstly, it made it difficult to have a strong sense of the make up of the Indian delegation of the Caravan. This made it difficult to discuss the involvement of some of the organisations beyond KRRS that formed part of the Caravan. I was unaware, for example, of the involvement of Mahendra Singh Tikait, until I was in Cologne and would have raised questions about Tikait's conduct and politics if I had known he was to be part of the Caravan. Secondly, it made it difficult to have the necessary information and documentation to support the visa applications and to have confidence that they were in process. This made it hard to get behind and believe in the project in a very committed way. This commitment was necessary for involvement in the planning of such an ambitious project.

The planning of the Caravan was also damaged by a vehement critique of the project by the prominent Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva which was circulated widely on e-mail networks. This revered and internationally renowned figure dissociated herself

from the ICC in the harshest possible terms. She argued that most of the 'so called 500 farmers who will be travelling to Europe as part of the "Caravan" are basically Bank officials, pesticides and seed agents and commission agents' (Shiva, 1999). The impact of Shiva's comments was on a much broader constituency than the small circle of people involved in organising the Caravan. The circulation of the e-mail had a major effect in discrediting the ICC in the activist networks which it was necessary to mobilise if the project was going to work. Her critique was considered seriously within the meetings. Partly responding to Shiva's criticisms, one activist commented that it was obvious it was not 'going to be the perfect Caravan', but it was still an exciting project. Others were harsher in their criticism of Shiva, seeing her as 'out of order' for circulating such a vehement critique. Discussions in the meetings situated Shiva's critique as part of long standing 'personality' and 'ego' clashes between Shiva and Swamy. This clash coalesced around a power struggle for the leadership and control of the Indian anti-globalisation movement that was being constituted in relation to transnational activist networks.

The tensions that emerged through the organisational work of the Caravan suggest that the charismatic authority of Nanjundaswamy and the KRRS was only partially reproduced through transnational activist networks. Tensions in the project, and within the London Welcoming Committee, led to some of the events organised while the Caravan was in London being tense and chaotic. There was considerable anger and resentment, at a Public Hearing organised for the activists from the Caravan in Friends Meeting House, on 28th May, that the Indian and Nepali activists only spoke after lunch, as speakers from British movements had overrun their time slots. But there were moments within the events of the Caravan where these tensions were exceeded and powerful and productive solidarities were produced and performed. One of the key ways that the Caravan was productive and innovative was that it placed opposition to genetic modification of organisms at the intersection of different routes of activity and resistance.

Haraway has argued that she 'cannot help but hear in the biotechnology debates the unintended tones of fear of the alien and suspicion of the mixed' (Haraway, 1997: 61). She argues that the mobilisation of 'intrinsic natures' in these debates reproduces a 'purity akin to the doctrines of white racial hegemony' and gives 'short shrift' to the 'mixed up history of living beings' (ibid.). The interactions of the ICC opened up the possibility of locating a politics around genetic modification at the intersection of potentially unsettling routes of activity. For as chapter 3 argued, the ICC was not mobilised around a consensual version of the 'environment'. The process brought together activists who constructed their identities through diverse and contested relations and practices with non-humans. These

different practices cut across the groups who were brought together through the ICC, and suggested the possibility of unsettling the problematic identifications Haraway has argued have been made in biotechnology debates (on the opposition to mixing and impurity in UK protests against GM food, see Bingham, forthcoming).

Different practices in relations with non-humans emerged through the activities of the Caravan such as the visit to a squatted GM test site near Bishop Stortford in Hertfordshire. GM activists had squatted the site and destroyed the part of the maize crop that had been cordoned off for testing. They greeted the Caravan with fine Irish tunes as we crossed fields to meet them. But activists from the Punjab BKU with whom we walked across the fields talked in very different terms about their resistance to GM crops. They argued that the wheat that was growing in the fields around us was far thinner and less productive than the wheat they grew on their small 10-20 acre holdings. Though they were adamantly opposed to GM varieties of crops they talked about using pesticides on their crops and were strongly in support of them. They talked about how pesticides were necessary to produce successful yields.

This 'productivist' tone of some of the farmers' stories had quite unsettling effects. Some UK activists assumed the Indians' would practice only traditional farming techniques.<sup>20</sup> These different attitudes to agricultural practices were the source of debate. There was questioning, in a fairly non hostile way, as to whether India had any movements in direct support of 'organic' forms of agriculture. This suggests that these issues were brought into debate and contestation through these interactions. This opened up the possibility of creatively unsettling how resistance practices towards genetic modification were conducted. The slogans used by Indian activists in demonstrations in London, such as 'no patents on life', spoke far more to a contestation of the patent systems that genetically modified plants were part of than to a concern at the threat of 'mixing' and of a disruption of the imagined 'purity' of the plants they used.

It was unclear to what extent these exchanges had effects. But they took place within the emergence of some powerful, inspiring interactions. The Indian activists showed their support for the action of uprooting the GM crops through watering in organic seedlings on the site where GM maize had been up-rooted. There were also exchanges of stories and music. A traveller involved in the crop squat sang about the resistance to colonialism in Ireland. A Punjabi farmer countered by singing a song about the Punjabi anti-colonial resistance, which I accompanied on the cittern. The introduction he and others gave to the song situated it as part of the history of their present struggles. Through doing this they explicitly hailed us as part of shared struggles against new forms of colonialism. These

interactions suggest some of the productive, exciting and passionate moments of the activity and conduct of these solidarities. They were certainly articulated as such by some of the Indian activists. One Indian activist present at the crop squat argued:

We have not even dreamt that people of this part of the world, the peasants and the poor people of Europe would join us in our struggle against the multi nationals. With this we are not only happy, we are strengthened, empowered and we assure you we'll double our fight.

(cited by Do or Die 1999: 98).

Some of the alliances that were formed through the Caravan, however, were constituted in direct opposition to the pro-agricultural development politics of organisations like the BKU.<sup>21</sup> Discussions between Nepali activists from INHURED (International Institute for Human Rights, Environment and Development) and the members of the Brighton based cooking collective, the Anarchist Teapot, were constituted through common adherence to an explicitly anti-development politics. Their discussions centred on the political practices being used and developed in the mass mobilisations against big development projects, particularly dams (Do or Die, 1999: 209-215). But it was also significant that some activists I spoke to found their adherence to an anti-development politics unsettled by discussions with Indian activists. An Australian activist argued that meeting up and talking with the Indian farmers had challenged her views about the outright rejection of processes of development.<sup>22</sup> Similar points were made by a French activist writing in the first ICC newsletter (ICC, 1999a). The forms of commonality mobilised by the ICC could thus be more diverse and multiple than is suggested by a fixed notion of a common good, pre-existing the formation of these political alliances.

The process enabled the rubbing up together of quite different activist identities and traditions in productive ways. This process was not uncontested. One of the productive aspects of the project was that some of the tensions which emerged through the conduct of the Caravan were brought into the terrain of contestation. Contestations of the status of gender relations and the reproduction of particularistic nationalist identities were brought to the fore in some of the evaluations of the project. The contested processes through which solidarities were formed were productive in defining and experimenting with some of the terms of an explicitly internationalist anti-neo-liberal-globalisation politics. These concerns led to the adoption of the following political statement at the Second Gathering of People's Global Action in Bangalore.



"We reject all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all creeds. We embrace the full dignity of all human beings".

(PGA, 1999b).

The bringing together of different activist cultures was a process that was generative of debate, negotiation and contestation rather than a simple coming together of homogeneous action or pre-existing wills. One of the outcomes of the Caravan project was this attempt to think about the construction of a counter-globalisation politics that took seriously the challenges of nationalisms and unequal gender relations.

The formation of the Caravan was a long and difficult process, which allowed some of the fissures and differences in terms of constructions of an internationalist anti-globalisation movement to emerge in ways which perhaps shorter more intense bursts of activity like the action against the WTO in Seattle do not. The way some of these fissures and differences became the subject of contestation illustrates that the acts of bringing together different political movements will not be an easy process structured around pre-existing political wills. The formation of friend-enemy identifications was not something that neatly pre-existed the activity. Further, the forms of political identities that different activists brought to these interactions had effects on how they were conducted. The next section begins to discuss the maps of grievance formed through the conduct of the ICC, and some of the actions of London coal-heavers in 1768. It discusses the effects these maps of grievance had on the political activity and identities that emerged through these actions.

#### **5.4 The construction of maps of grievance: making power-geometries contestable**

Mouffe has argued that rather than 'erasing the traces of power and exclusion' a radical democratic politics requires us to bring such traces 'to the fore' (Mouffe, 2000: 33-4). The activity of movements like the ICC emphasise that the work of rendering spatially stretched relations of power part of the terrain of contestation is itself a process which is constituted by struggle. Political activity and struggle is needed to bring these traces of power and exclusion to the fore and to render them contestable. The 'maps of grievance' crafted and produced through political activity are part of this work of making power-geometries contestable. This section discusses some of the spatial practices through which

power-geometries are rendered contestable, and argues that the way these power-geometries are related to and imagined has effects on the kinds of political identities formed through particular struggles.

One of the most contested aspects of the planning of the Caravan in the London Welcoming Committee meetings arose from discussions relating to where in London the Caravan should be involved in action. These tensions emerged partly because some of the Indian participants of the Caravan had expressed an interest in holding a demonstration outside parliament. These proposals spoke to the deep symbolic significance the British Parliament had for their histories of political activity. This idea, and subsequent proposals, to hold a demonstration outside parliament, were fiercely contested. This made issues of how and where wider relations of power could be made contestable central to the political identities being shaped through the Caravan project.

The idea of holding a protest outside parliament met with considerable hostility from the London Welcoming committee. One activist argued that to protest at Parliament was to miss the point, because it was no longer government that controlled things but multi nationals.<sup>23</sup> She also argued that because we were doing the work of organising the Caravan in the UK they would have to fit into our analysis of politics. This point raised criticism for refusing to incorporate the ideas of Indians into the planning of the project. But the hostility to making a protest at Parliament was widespread. A position emerged that it would be much more desirable to march and construct actions in the City as this was where the 'real power' was located. At later meetings a British Asian activist spoke of this march through London to the key sites of power of the City as invoking the Gandhian non violent practices of the salt marches.<sup>24</sup> The City was seen as the part of London which was intertwined with the Indians' lives through processes of globalisation. The orientation of action towards contesting the financial power of the City and away from the centres of 'political' power produced a politics that accepted key claims of proponents of contemporary neo-liberal globalisation. It was structured by accepting claims that the nation state was no longer relevant. This analysis was coproduced through the process of forming the maps of grievance of the ICC.

These debates were re-opened later in the organisation of the Caravan, after Jeremy Corbyn MP and Stan Newens MEP invited the Caravan to a fairly small reception at the Houses of Parliament.<sup>25</sup> Corbyn and Newens had sponsored the project to improve the chances of the Indian activists receiving visas. The fierce contestation over whether or not to attend this reception went beyond deep suspicions that the politicians would try to make some sort of political capital out of it, or that the media coverage of such an event

would be difficult to control. Strongly held arguments were put forward that any action at parliament was contrary to the spirit of the Caravan and that attendance would confer on parliament a false legitimacy. This position rubbed up against other stances in the group. A genetix activist argued that it was an opportunity which could be exploited rather than simply a problem. He argued against a simple dismissal of Parliament, arguing it still had a role in legislation over genetic engineering.

These contestations over where the action should happen illustrate some of the effects that the construction of maps of grievance have on the ways different routes of political activity are 'properly brought together'. The political identities of the action were negotiated through contesting how wider power-geometries should be related to and imagined. Spatial practices also emerged through the conduct and action of the Caravan which suggests how adversaries can be quickly defined and contested through political activity.

On the first full day the Caravan was in London, *The Nuffield Council on Bioethics* released its report evaluating the ethical and social issues of genetically modified crops. The report concluded that there was a 'moral imperative' for research and development of genetically modified crops because of their potential 'to conquer world hunger' (*Guardian* 28-5-'99, Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 1999). The line of the report provoked outrage among UK activists present at the public hearing of the Caravan at Friends House on Euston Road. Many of these activists had been long standing participants in the actions against GM crop sites. Genetix activists quickly organised an action to contest the Council's unequivocal support for such biotechnology.

Indian, Nepali and UK activists came out of the Hall at Friends Meeting House on Euston Road and made the short walk to the Nuffield Foundation in Bedford Square. We gathered outside the Foundation's building and watched and chanted as some of the Indian delegation and a small number of UK activists jostled past bemused security guards into the building. Fifty to hundred of us gathered outside the Foundation's headquarters waiting for the delegation to emerge. Musicians from the radical group Seize the Day! performed their anti Monsanto anthem 'Food 'n' Health 'n' Hope'. The Indian activists contested the uncritical version of relations with the South/ Third World which had been mobilised in the report to support the development of biotechnology. They also criticised the way that although the Third World had been powerfully mobilised in the report, Third World perspectives had been absent from the expert process and panel which had formulated the report's line. The delegation told the Nuffield Foundation that:

We will not let your corporations justify genetic engineering with the lie that it will alleviate the suffering, dispossession and poverty that these same corporations are responsible for.

(Cited by Do or Die, 1999: 98).

The Indians asked for a consultancy fee for their advice. When they emerged there was chanting of anti-WTO slogans on the steps of the Nuffield Foundation, connecting the action to a wider critique of neo-liberal globalisation.

In terms of media coverage this was an event which had a low profile. But it brought vehement opposition to the report to the Foundation's headquarters. It dragged this organisation, which through its report had deftly constructed itself as a 'neutral and objective body', into a terrain of active political contestation. The character of this contestation was distinctively located at the intersections of routes of political activity. It produced a challenge to the stories about the South being mobilised through the report, rather than articulating genetic modification as a threat to an imagined purity of intrinsic natures. The friend-enemy relations here were constituted through rapid action against an emerging enemy. This was a productive practice enabling militant political identities to come together at this site of grievance.

If, as Mouffe has argued, one of the basic tenets of radical politics is 'the definition of an adversary', then the practices through which adversaries are isolated and defined is a key question in any understanding of how movements create political agency (Mouffe, 1998: 13). The political agency of the ICC here was constituted through spatial practices which attempted to make visible and contestable wider relations of power. This agency was produced from the circulation and formation of 'practical-moral knowledges' about the Nuffield Foundation and its report. This is an example of how an adversary was defined very quickly and how activist networks were mobilised to contest it through spatial practices which attempted to localise and make contestable wider power relations at this key site. The formation of very specific maps of grievance and the mobilisation of action in relation to them was also central to the practices through which coal heavers and Whiteboys constructed their politics, although they mobilised very different styles of action.

In April of 1768 Irish Coal heavers gathered at night and assaulted with stones, howling and gunfire the Roundabout Tavern, run by John Green, an Undertaker in the London coal trade. Green worked for the agent appointed by Alderman Beckford to

restructure the labour relations of coal heaving. Green had publicly advertised for labourers to break the combinations in the Coal heaving trade, and was organising labour outside of these combinations from this tavern (Shelton, 1973: 174-6). The assault on Green's tavern could seem an arbitrary, spontaneous event. But Green's evidence to the trial of eight coal heavers accused of the assault on his house suggests it was an event with a clear history and that, far from being random or spontaneous, this assault was sanctioned by clear legitimising notions. Green noted that a month before the coal heavers assaulted his house 'a great many of them threatened they would pull my house down; they said I had better be quiet or they would do me; [...] They went away, some howling, some hallooing, and some pointing to me' (Proceedings, 1768: 245). He also remarked that the coal heavers assembled 'four or five times before ever they attacked me' (ibid).

These were violent forms of action, but they had histories and specificity. The specificity and history of the build up of the assault on Green's tavern supports Thompson's argument that the targets of the eighteenth century crowd were characterised by particularity: 'it was this miller, this dealer [...] who provoke [d] indignation and action' (Thompson 1991: 212) The Whiteboys' and coal heavers' threats and actions were usually against particular individuals (or their relatives, property or animals), but they targeted individuals who were integrated into wider networks of power and thus their actions could have non-intentional effects elsewhere. The actions of Whiteboys and coal heavers were held together by the gathering and circulation of unofficial knowledges about who was a corrupt agent; who was outside of combinations; who was a tyrannical landlord or middleman. The contestation of the conduct of particular actors was crucially important in the processes through which they defined their adversaries. Although their acts against their adversaries were often constituted through a particularity of grievance the action created around such particularisms did not necessarily just have local and immediate effects or implications. Green, for example, was related to the networks of corrupt relations between Undertakers in London and coal dealers in Newcastle<sup>26</sup>. His employer, Alderman Beckford, was a hub of the corrupt West India interest (Fryer, 1984: 48). There are thus shifting relations between particularity and wider networks of power in the action of the coal heavers and Whiteboys here.

The political action taken by the ICC and the coal heavers was defined through the ways that institutions and individuals are defined as enemies, and are rendered contestable through that activity. The kinds of legitimising notions mobilised in these different acts are very different, as are the idioms of collective action mobilised in each. The violence of the coal heavers contrasts with the defining non-violence and carnivalesque forms of

territorialisation utilised by the ICC. It would be wrong to suggest that the maps of grievance constructed through these actions somehow intersect with and express the true interests of the ICC or coal heavers. But it is equally wrong to see these actions as arbitrary or spontaneous.<sup>27</sup> The construction of friend-enemy relations through the formations of maps of grievance is ongoing and unfinished. This necessitates theorising such relations in a way that can focus on the constructedness of these grievances, but that can also account for their histories and specificity.

For activists can bring specific conceptions and histories of maps of grievance to events. One of the key tensions of the conduct of the ICC was the way that the Indian farmers' movements brought to the Caravan histories of opposing neo-liberal globalisation through particularist, nationalist discourses. Some of these discourses were partially unsettled through the process. But they also exerted pressure on the kinds of maps of grievance that were constructed through the activity of the ICC. While the ICC were in London there was a proposal to join a CND picket outside the Indian embassy in London to protest at India's continued involvement in nuclear testing. This proposal met with extreme hostility from one of the Indian activists, who vehemently opposed the idea of protesting against India having nuclear weapons.<sup>28</sup> This opposition closed down the possibility of engaging the Caravan in joint action at this protest. These aspects of the conduct of the ICC suggest that identification in terms of the practices of the political being deployed did not necessarily produce identification in the forms of political identity being crafted through these joint actions. And further, that these different political identities could become articulated in hostile, antagonistic ways.

This emphasises that movements do not 'spontaneously converge' through the formation of solidarities (Mouffe, 1993: 18). There are often bitter contestations about which aspects of power-geometries are rendered contestable and how. Here I have begun to argue that making spatially stretched power relations part of the terrain of contestation, is a process of struggle, rather than something which happens spontaneously. I have also begun to illustrate how political alliances were formed through the ICC through shared identification with the practices like non-violent direct action through which power relations are made contestable. This suggests how activity can generate alliances, rather than alliances being determined by adherence to a prior political philosophy. This problematises Mouffe's argument that political philosophies can stake out the limits within which equivalences are formed and negotiated (Mouffe 1993: 19). For acknowledging the generative character of political activity necessitates a stress on how practical-moral knowledges are continually formed and negotiated through political

activity. This threatens the idea that political philosophies can set the limits within which political activities like the formation of equivalences are conducted. But some of the conduct of the ICC also threatens the idea that identifications in terms of shared involvement in political practices are necessarily durable or progressive. The next section uses a conversation between spatial thinking and the work of Schmitt and Mouffe to engage with these tensions.

### **5.5 Friend-enemy relations and the constitutive role of spatiality**

Carl Schmitt (1963: 26) in his essay *The Concept of the Political* argues that 'the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.' Answering his own complaint about the elusiveness of 'a clear definition of the political', he situates conflict and adversarial relations at the very centre of a theory of the political.

The political is the most intense and extreme antagonism, and every concrete antagonism becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the extreme point, that of the friend enemy grouping.

(Schmitt, 1963: 29).

Here Schmitt reconfigures conflict between different friend-enemy groupings as constitutive of the political relation. He also sets up a more troubling identification here. His positive stress on the intensity of antagonism suggests that as the forms of antagonism become more extreme, the forms of political relations being constituted correspondingly increase in terms of their purity and desirability. Schmitt's move in refiguring collective forms of conflict as central to understandings of politics is an explicit challenge to versions of pluralism which seek to place conflict outside of politics. His account of the centrality of the friend enemy relation to politics was formulated as a critique of the versions of pluralism developed by writers like G.D.H. Cole and Harold Laski.

For Schmitt the versions of pluralism developed theoretically by Cole and Laski and practically by liberalism deny the specificity of the political. Schmitt argues that such versions of pluralism exteriorise the collective forms of conflict signified by the formation of friend-enemy relations. The result of Cole and Laski's versions of pluralism is:

nothing else than a revocable service for individuals and their free associations. One association is played off against another and all questions and conflicts are decided by

individuals [...] The ever present possibility of a friend-and-enemy grouping suffices to forge a decisive entity which transcends the mere societal-associational groupings.

(Schmitt, 1963: 45).

Schmitt's critique of liberal pluralism's reduction of politics to negotiations between individuals permits a focus on the collective formation of political identities and procedures. His stress on the formation of friend-enemy groupings emphasises that conflict cannot be simply eroded or transcended but will always constitute a challenge to political institutions and procedures. These insights challenge political theories and practices which focus solely on the role of atomistic individuals and which see adversary as a political relation which can be eliminated or transcended. Schmitt, however, deals inadequately with questions of how the political collectivities signified by friend-enemy groupings are constituted.

His account of how friend-enemy relations are constituted has recourse to vague, uncritical terms such as 'a people'<sup>29</sup> (Schmitt, 1963: 53). He also reifies the moment of conflict viewing non-violent forms of political mediation as a kind of degradation of politics (Schmitt, 1963: 33). He argues that a 'pacified globe' would be 'a world without politics' (Schmitt, 1963: 35). Schmitt's stress on the necessity of a homogeneous version of the people leads him to reject any notion of pluralism out of a belief that it 'could [not] take place without destroying [...] the political itself' (Schmitt, 1963: 45). He articulates his critique of liberal democracy to an outright rejection of pluralism, refusing to engage with how a politics that accepts pluralistic political identities might also take account of the constitutive role of conflict. Mouffe engages with this tension between Schmitt's stress on the constitutive role of conflict in the formation of the political and his rejection of pluralism. She describes this rejection of pluralism as a refusal to see that there can be 'legitimate dissent among friends' (Mouffe, 1999a: 5).

She argues that taking seriously Schmitt's insight concerning the centrality of friend-enemy groupings to politics might 'force us to come to terms with an aspect of democratic politics that liberalism tends to eliminate' (Mouffe, 1999b: 39). She uses such questioning to critique emergent versions of politics which have constructed themselves as 'a politics without adversary' (Mouffe, 2000: 108-128). She argues against the tendency of New Labour, and associated theorists like Giddens, to evade the constitutive role of power. This reduces the political to negotiation of differences between actors with fixed identities. As I argued in chapter 4, other very different political practices like the



Planning for Real process can also be structured by this evasion. It is in response to these positions that she makes the argument that is central to the argument of this thesis that the 'traces of power and exclusion' must be rendered part of the terrain of contestation of the political.

The discussion of the spatial practices of the ICC above have sought to demonstrate that political activity can construct agency through the process of making spatially stretched power relations part of the terrain of contestation. Examining how these power relations are made part of the terrain of contestation can permit a focus on the practices through which the political collectivities of friend-enemy groupings are constituted. These lines of contestation and friendship are generated and continually formed through political activity, rather than merely playing out already constituted friend-enemy relations.

Developing an argument about the spatial practices through which friend-enemy relations are constituted demands dislocating the key shared terms of debate that structure Mouffe's adversarial engagement with Schmitt. There are some very striking differences in tone and analysis between Mouffe and Schmitt. But there are some key terms of debate that Mouffe and Schmitt broadly share. I want to engage with these shared terms of debate to stress how friend-enemy relations are constructed through ongoing and contested political activity. Mouffe and Schmitt share an agreement that the fixed container of the nation-state (or assemblages of nation-states) is the arena where friend-enemy relations are constructed, an insistence on the negative construction of identities, an insistence on 'the conceptual autonomy of the political' and a specifically human version of what constitutes a political actor and a political relation.

The discussion of the shifting relations of friendship and grievance of the Indian New Farmers' movements earlier in this chapter illustrated that friend-enemy relations and groupings are not fixed and predetermined before political activity mobilises them. They have emphasised that these friend-enemy relations produced specific maps of grievance through their activity. This places questions about the maps of grievance constructed through political activity at the centre of a discussion of friend-enemy relations. Maps of grievance are productive and allow militant particularist action to move and make webs of power relations contestable. The political agency of the ICC was partly constituted through attempting to make the relations of power of neo-liberal globalisation visible and contestable. Although it should be remembered that the way KRRS's opposition to neo-liberal globalisation had been formed through relations with exceptionalist forms of Indian nationalism had effects on the kinds of friendships and alliances formed through this process.

The movement of friend-enemy relations between different spatial domains is a tension which haunts Schmitt's discussion of friend-enemy relations. For however strictly Schmitt tries to fix and align the friend-enemy relation to an equivalence with a specific territorial or juridical assemblage, the relation moves both beyond and within these alignments. Derrida argues that Schmitt 'at one and the same time, privilege[s] the State (even if he does not reduce the political to it), base[s] the concept of enemy on the possibility of war between states and nevertheless symmetrically align [s] [...] exterior war and civil war as if the enemy were sometimes the foreigner sometimes the fellow citizen' (Derrida, 1994: 121). The way Derrida teases out the different domains through which Schmitt constructs friend-enemy relations illustrates the impossibility of fixing and restricting such relations and groupings to one specific spatial domain. The way these friend-enemy relations move and unsettle the boundaries of the nation-state which Mouffe and Schmitt tend to treat almost as given, is a challenge to spatial understandings of politics.<sup>30</sup> Examining how friend-enemy groupings move emphasises that the spaces of politics are constantly being negotiated and re-negotiated through the work of political activity.

This in turn suggests that questions around the spaces of politics being mobilised and produced through political activity cannot be relegated to questions of a fixed backdrop but are actually at stake and partially constituted through such action. Pan Africanist organising, for example, challenges 'our understanding of modern politics precisely because it overflow[ed] from the confining structures of the nation state' (Gilroy, 1993: 151). The questions posed by the movement of friend-enemy relations and groupings are not just abstract, theoretical questions. They are integral to the practices and activity of political organising. They are also not unique to the current conjuncture delineated by neoliberal globalisation. There are two main consequences that flow from reworking friend-enemy relations in a way which suggests that political identities and maps of grievance are co-constituted.

Firstly, a stress on the way friend-enemy relations move and follow power relations beyond the fixed boundaries of nation states illustrates how movements construct agency through making wider power relations localisable and contestable. The spatial practices through which adversaries are defined and followed become integral to the ways that friend-enemy relations are formed. The political activity of the Caravan moved as it followed different spatially constituted relations of power. It did so in a way which enabled its political agency and identity to be constructed through dragging relations of power that are not confined within the neat boundaries of nation states into contestation. Following the way friend-enemy relations move as adversaries are defined and located

illustrates some of the processes through which marginalised groups make wider skeins of power relations contestable. The act of rendering these skeins of power part of the terrain of contestation is itself a work of struggle.

Secondly, the particular ways in which maps of grievance can be imagined can have important effects on the kinds of political identities being crafted through such action. This can have effects on the kinds of equivalences which are constructed through this activity. Thus, although the Caravan aspired to the creation of a routed and internationalist version of political friendship, one of the key tensions of the project was the way it reproduced rather than disrupted some very particularist political identities. When Nanjundaswamy complained of India's 'impotence', when BKU activists bullied the two member Nepali contingent of the Caravan in London and tried to prevent both from speaking at the hearing on the grounds that it was an Indian not a Nepali Caravan, the activity of the Caravan refigured fixed and particularist Indian nationalist political identities. This reproduced a fixed spatial imagination of protest which articulated maps of grievances as existing only between rural India and wider power geometries. These relations with these power geometries did not allow equivalences to be made with others struggling against similar power geometries, and was even defined against other participants within the Caravan. This was strengthened by Nanjundaswamy's insistence on the Caravan being overwhelmingly drawn from particular Indian movements.

At its most problematic this produced a kind of internationalism with guarantees which structured the Caravan so that it would tell only a particular Indian story about the effects of globalisation. This constructed only Indian nationalist identities through contestation of neo-liberal globalisation. But the way these militant particularisms moved and were reconfigured also allowed more productive engagements to emerge. This suggests that political identities might be unsettled and positive identifications might be formed through the process. The contestations of nationalism and gender relations in the practice of the Caravan illustrate how the formation of equivalences is ongoing, productive and contested. This contestation led to attempts to form spaces of association that might deploy the subjectivities needed to create anti-homogeneous forms of internationalism. For the ways maps of grievance are imagined and produced through activity are important for differentiating between movements and activities which are defined through forging 'new identities' or 'buttressing existing' national or ethnic identities (Morris-Suzuki, 2000: 82). Engaging with the way maps of grievance are mobilised can suggest whether political activity will refigure hardened and particularistic nationalisms or allow a multiplicity of positive identifications to be formed. José Bové of

the French peasant movement, the Confederation Paysanne threw off the label of 'little Francer' and distanced himself from the French National Front through talking about 'protect[ing] farmers in Africa and Asia' as well as in France (Hattenstone, 2001: 4).

The multiple political identifications conjured by the Zapatista slogan 'one no but many yeses' becomes key to understanding how equivalences are formed. Making multiple positive associations through opposition to power geometries like those of neo-liberal globalisation is a condition for deploying the relatively open forms of subjectivities that are needed for equivalences to be formed. This necessitates transcending the negative sense of identity formation that is often conjured by the friend-enemy distinction. Schmitt adopted a focus on the negative formation of identity through hatred of an enemy, and both Laclau and Mouffe view political identities as being formed primarily through negative identifications (Schmitt, 1963, Laclau, 1994: 3, Mouffe, 1993: 2). The positive identifications which make up friendships and equivalences are far more multiple and cross cutting than this purely negative view of identity formation allows. This suggests a theory of political identity that views friendship as constituted only negatively against enemies is inadequate. Instead it is necessary to view equivalences as 'positive constructions' defined through positive interrelations with other struggles rather than just through negative identifications against enemies (Massey, 1999: 63-64). This permits a focus on the formation of equivalences as simultaneously a rejection of neo-liberal forms of globalisation and an affirmation of solidarities among unlike actors struggling against the same institutions.

A focus on the spatial practices through which these friend-enemy relations are defined emphasises that they are produced through the engagements of political activity, rather than existing fully constituted prior to such activity. The practices through which these relations are produced and reproduced cut across the way that Schmitt and Mouffe assert the conceptual autonomy of the political. Mouffe argues for the importance of 'reflection on the autonomous values of the political' (Mouffe, 1993: 114) and both Mouffe and Schmitt continually define the political against other domains such as the legal and moral (Mouffe, 1993: 114, 1999b: 40, 51, Schmitt, 1963: 27). This assertion of the conceptual autonomy of the political purifies the processes of construction of political identities from the activity of knowing who is a friend or enemy. Derrida argues that Schmitt's abstractions are removed from the activity of knowing the friend or enemy.

If *the* political is to exist, one must know who everyone is, who is a friend and who is an enemy, and this *knowing* is not in the mode of theoretical knowledge but in one of a

*practical identification*; knowing consists here in knowing how to identify the friend and the enemy [...]

(Derrida, 1994: 116, emphasis in original).

The situation is complicated further since the practical identifications ‘seem to be sometimes conditions, sometimes consequences of the identification of friend and enemy’ (ibid.)

In Schmitt’s formulation the political becomes a purified domain which is constitutively separated from the ongoing practices and conduct of political activity. Schmitt defines the friend-enemy groupings of the political against everyday and personalised versions of conflict. He argues the political ‘enemy is not a private adversary who one hates’ (Schmitt 1963: 28). Such a view separates the process of defining adversaries from the kind of unofficial knowledges and experience that I suggested in the last section were key to the processes through which coal heavers and Whiteboys created their maps of grievance. The discussion of the actions of the coal heavers suggests that the processes through which they defined adversaries were not structured by a neat separation between the personal and wider political adversaries. Rather particular and wider power relations were interrelated in these processes. The coal heavers attacked Green’s Tavern, for example, but the antagonistic relations being constructed here were over his conduct, his role as a coal undertaker and his relations with Alderman Beckford. This in turn was related to a wider hostility to the practices of middlemen which was an important idiom of both Irish and English subaltern politics in the mid-eighteenth century<sup>31</sup> (Kenny, 1998: 18-19, Shelton, 1973: 53, Thompson, 1991: 185-258). The friend-enemy relations being discussed in the movements here exceed the limits of a separate sphere denoted as the political. For friend-enemy relations are constituted through the entangled practices of the political rather than through recourse to the purified imagination of the political adopted by Schmitt and Mouffe.

Derrida argues that Schmitt’s attempt ‘to exclude from all other purity (objective, scientific, moral, juridical, psychological, economic, aesthetic, etc.) the purity of the political’ is ‘*a priori* doomed to failure’ (Derrida, 1994: 116). Derrida’s critique of this will to purity resonates with Latour’s critique of the strategies of purification adopted by the modern constitution. Latour argues that it is through ongoing work of purification that the modern constitution has attempted to create ‘two entirely distinct ontological zones’: ‘that of human beings on the one hand; that of non-humans on the other’ (Latour, 1993:

11). Schmitt and Mouffe constitute the 'conceptual autonomy of the political' through such a work of purification. They not only give the political a logic and autonomy separate from other 'spheres' such as the moral or the economic, their work is structured by a specifically human version of what constitutes a political actor, identity or relation.<sup>32</sup> The conduct of different environmentalisms of the poor suggest that friend-enemy relations are formed through more entangled practices than this version of the political allows.

In section 5.2 I argued that the maps of grievance formed by the KRRS in opposition to the Dunkel Draft mobilised unofficial ethical practices which were formed in relation to particular forms of arrangement of collectives of humans and non-humans. Friend-enemy identifications were defined here through practical ethical positions contesting the power relations and networks through which seeds are generated. The KRRS mobilised a defence of the unofficial networks of seed distribution and production in opposition to attempts to establish seed varieties as the sole property of certain Western companies. The friend-enemy relations here are defined through contesting and articulating as unequal, practices which Latour describes as 'enrolment'. He defines enrolment as the techniques through which nonhumans are 'seduced, manipulated or induced into the collective' (Latour, 1994: 46). The friend-enemy relations produced and delineated through the activity of 'environmentalisms of the poor' can be formed in relation to and can generate particular practices of enrolment. The KRRS have been active in denouncing the way the Dunkel Draft envisions plant varieties as being enrolled into collectives as patented life forms. But they have also mobilised and generated different forms of enrolment of non humans through strategies such as the formation of seed banks based on mass-participation of the communities mobilised by KRRS.

Friend-enemy groupings and relations are not formed by actors discussing questions only of human co-existence. The 'practical moral knowledges' through which such identifications are produced and reproduced can also bear on the complicated forms of co-existence between humans and non-humans. The way friend-enemy relations mobilise and generate contestation of specific forms of co-existence dislocates the specifically human political subjects that inhabit the work of Mouffe and Schmitt. But an insistence that friend-enemy relations are constructed through particular ways of engaging with forms of co-existence emphasises that forms of co-existence and arrangement can be defined and produced in antagonistic ways. This has implications for some of the ways that the politics of collectives of humans and non-humans are thought.

Latour's notion of a 'parliament of things' is one of the most sustained attempts to

think through the co-constitution of politics, science and nature. His writing usefully deconstructs the moderns' tendency to denounce through reference to the modern constitution which enabled an 'upper ground for taking a critical stance' through appeals to the purified domains of Nature, Society and God (Latour, 1993: 43). Latour proposes that a rejection of these styles of denunciation can be productive. He argues for the ratification of unofficial forms of morality which have functioned through 'arrangement, combination, *combinazione*, combine but also negotiation or compromise' (Latour, 1993: 45-6). He argues that in a 'parliament of things' the two halves of the modern constitution can be patched together so that 'the imbroglios and networks that had no place now have the whole to place themselves' (Latour, 1993: 144). This does not demand a revolution, for it is simply ratifying 'what we have always done' (ibid.).

This reworking of the political is significant. But I think it is also important to ratify something else which 'we have always done', so as not to exclude this from the constitution of a 'parliament of things'. This is the way that these different combinations and arrangements have been the site of conflict and antagonism. For there are ambiguities about the role of conflict in Latour's reworking of the political. I think these issues can be clarified by thinking through aspects of the politics of collectives with relation to Schmitt and Mouffe's insistence that conflict is a central part of the political. The insights of Mouffe and Schmitt warn us against patching the two halves of the modern constitution back together in a way which is structured by a liberal pluralism which erases antagonism in its search for a rational consensus. For doing this would close down the possibilities opened up by Latour's reworking of the political. Thinking about how forms of human and non-human co-existence have been engaged with in antagonistic ways is also central to understanding the character and agency of diverse environmentalisms of the poor.

## 5.6 Conclusions

This chapter has engaged with attempts to place conflict at the centre of a definition of the political. Drawing on the work of Mouffe and Schmitt I have explored what defining the political in terms of the formation of friend-enemy relations does to an attempt to view the spatial and political as co-constitutive. I have introduced the concept of 'maps of grievance' to spatialise the ongoing practices through which friend-enemy relations are formed. This permits a focus on how friend-enemy relations move, but also on how spatialised power relations are brought into the terrain of contestation through the conduct of political activity. I have argued that how maps of grievance are constructed has effects on the kinds of equivalences that can be crafted through activity and on their durability.

Through developing a focus on the practices through which friend-enemy relations are negotiated the chapter has also begun to articulate those relations to an entangled version of the political. I have argued that, contrary to Mouffe and Schmitt, friend-enemy groupings are formed through engaging with different forms of human/ non human co-existence. This places a focus on how political activity is mobilised through positive and negative relations with particular ways of enrolling non humans into collectives. In making this argument I have drawn on Latour's arguments about the necessity of deconstructing the modern forms of denunciation that structure most political theory. But I have also argued that an insistence on the importance of conflict is necessary to ensure that attempts to patch the two halves of the modern constitution together do not reproduce the power-free pluralism adopted by versions of political liberalism.

This chapter has emphasised that the practices through which maps of grievance are constructed are ongoing and contested and have effects on the political identities that emerge through activity. It has also begun to argue that maps of grievance are constructed through ongoing processes which combine and rearrange the orderings of humans and non humans. Chapter 6 develops this focus on how particular forms of combining and arranging collectives become mobilised and contested through the activity of environmentalisms of the poor. It explores how collective political wills can be formed through mobilising, contesting and reconstituting particular modes of ordering and spatial relations.

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<sup>1</sup>I feel that work which draws on Schmitt even in an adversarial way needs to make explicit the extreme right wing and anti-semitic politics with which he associated his ideas and political commitments. Here I follow Derrida's (1994: 107n4) uncharacteristically clear discussion which stresses the constitutive relation between Schmitt's politics and his political theory. Derrida argues that 'there is an undeniable link between [Schmitt's] thinking of the political and political thought on the one hand and, on the other, Schmitt's political commitments, those which led to his arrest and conviction after the war'. Though Derrida is insistent that these political commitments 'should not distract us from a serious reading'.

<sup>2</sup>For a striking example of the kind of hierarchical mobilisation which characterised the socialist internationals see C.L.R. James' discussion of why George Padmore left the comintern in the 1930s (Hall and James, 1996: 24-5).

<sup>3</sup>The term rhizomorphic solidarities is derived from a reading of Gilroy's use of the work of Deleuze and Guattari in tracing the routed political cultures that traversed the Black Atlantic (Gilroy, 1993, see also Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 3-25).

<sup>4</sup>For an interpretation of Gandhian action as non-hierarchical, see Maxey, 2000: 200. For extensive and detailed critiques of the forms of discipline constructed through Gandhian mobilisation, see Guha, 1997: 100-151, Chatterjee, 1984: 153-195.

<sup>5</sup>ICC/Discussions/16-18/6/1999.

<sup>6</sup>Satyagraha, literally 'exertion for truth', was the term used by Gandhi for nonviolent but illegal campaigns. The use of these tactics develop a continuity between New Farmers Movements and Gandhian struggles.

<sup>7</sup>The Dunkel Draft stated that Plant varieties 'must be protectable either by patents or by a sui generis system (such as the breeders's rights provided in a UPOV [Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plant] convention)' (WTO, 1999).

<sup>8</sup>While the ICC was in London it stayed at Kingsley Hall in Bow where Gandhi had stayed in the 1930s.



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<sup>9</sup> ICC/Discussions/19-20/6/1999.

<sup>10</sup> On the anti urbanism of Gandhian thought and action, see Chatterjee, 1984: 157. This anti-urbanism was constituted through relations with other routes of anti-urban thought. Gandhi drew inspiration from the writings of Tolstoy, Carpenter and Ruskin as well as classical Hindu texts (Chatterjee, 1984: 173)

<sup>11</sup> This formulation of charismatic authority draws on conversations with John Allen.

<sup>12</sup> ICC/Discussions/1-24/3/1999.

<sup>13</sup> In the first meeting I attended there was constant talk of breaking down in to groups around particular themes but this never actually happened, ICC/Discussions/1-24/3/1999.

<sup>14</sup> This shortened name was how Najundaswamy was known through the networks of the ICC.

<sup>15</sup> London Welcoming Committee meeting, ICC/Discussions/6-13/5/1999

<sup>16</sup> This draws on Arun Saldhana's comments about the orientalism of hippy culture, in a talk about Goa to an OU internal geography seminar, December, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> ICC/Discussions/3-8/4/1999

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> ICC/Discussions/20-27/10/1999.

<sup>20</sup> ICC/Discussions/11-29/5/1999.

<sup>21</sup> For an example of the productivist stories of the BKU, see Tikait, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> ICC/Discussions/18-19/6/1999.

<sup>23</sup> ICC/Discussions/1-24/3/1999.

<sup>24</sup> ICC/Discussions/6-13/5/1999.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> On the corrupt relations of the Undertakers, see *The Case of Francis Reynolds* (1764) and *Frauds and Abuses in the Coal-Trade Detected*, (1747).

<sup>27</sup> Girard (1987: 131), for example, defines the scapegoat as the point where spontaneous action intersects with ritual in the transference of anxiety onto an arbitrary victim.

<sup>28</sup> ICC/Discussions/9-28/5/1999.

<sup>29</sup> Schmitt writes of the way 'a people' needs to possess 'energy and will to maintain itself in the sphere of politics' (Schmitt, 1963: 53).

<sup>30</sup> Mouffe, for example, argues that the 'basis for a post-social democratic answer to neo-liberalism [...] could only be carried out successfully in a European context' without analysing some of the ways the European project is defined against Others in deeply problematic ways (Mouffe, 1998: 22-23).

<sup>31</sup> Shared resistance to 'the hordes of corn factors, butter merchants, cattle dealers, jobbers and contractors of all sorts' were the practices through which Irish intellectuals like Bronterre O'Brien involved in the Chartist movement imagined alliances between British and Irish workers (O'Brien, [1838] 1948: 245).

<sup>32</sup> Mouffe defines the political as the 'organisation of human co-existence' (Mouffe, 1998: 16).

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Friend-Enemy Relations and the Construction of Maps of Grievance**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The final section of chapter 4 illustrated that diverse alternative spatial imaginations are being mobilised against neo-liberal globalisation. It argued that the bounded, nationalist and particularist forms of politics mobilised by some of the participants in the ICC placed stresses on the solidarities produced through the Caravan. This suggests that the spatial practices of political activity have effects on the forms of solidarity that are crafted through activity. This chapter develops this engagement with the spatial imaginations and practices mobilised and produced through political activity. It examines what it might mean to think spatially Carl Schmitt's argument that the formation of friend-enemy groupings is a central part of a definition of the political (Schmitt, 1963). I use the friend-enemy distinction here to explore the dynamics through which antagonisms are constructed. The chapter engages with the ways 'environmentalisms of the poor' have contested dominant power-geometries, and have articulated as enemies those groups who have produced social and environmental relations in unequal ways. The chapter also argues that the spatial practices through which these friend-enemy relations are articulated and defined have effects on the character of the identities and agency produced through their activity.

These are important theoretical questions for the thesis. Examining how spatial practices constitute political identities and how political activity reconfigures spatial relations is central to the approach to identity and agency that is adopted here. Movements like the Inter-Continental Caravan are defined by articulating 'friend-enemy relations' through diverse spatial practices of resistance. This is partly because the power relations that these movements contest spill out of the confining structures of the nation-state and are not being dealt with adequately by many Western and non-Western political systems. These practices, through which political movements construct wider power relations as hostile and contestable, are constitutive of the political action the movements engage in. In this discussion these spatial practices through which friend-enemy relations are defined and engaged with are described as the construction of 'maps of grievance.' The old word 'grievance' is used to denote that these are processes of imagining and experiencing wider power relations rather than engagements with a static map of power.

For actors craft their political identities and engagements through engaging with wider power relations rather than having fixed interests constituted in relation to already existing spatial configurations of power. These engagements with wider power relations are not

spontaneous or arbitrary. They are crafted in relation to histories and geographies of action which have made power relations contestable through drawing on specific imaginations of power and versions of alternative orders. The chapter argues that the formation of 'maps of grievance' and the dragging of wider power relations into the 'terrain of contestation' are key spatial practices through which 'environmentalisms of the poor' have contested unequal social and environmental relations. Spatial relations are also reconstituted through the way these maps of grievance are constructed. Changes in the ways maps of grievance are imagined can permit the formation of different networks of political activity and alliances.

This chapter draws on Mouffe's innovative reading of the legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt.<sup>1</sup> Mouffe (1993, 1999a, 1999b, 2000) leads a critical invocation of the importance of Schmitt's placing of the formation of friend-enemy groupings at the centre of a definition of the political. In the wake of claims of 'the end of politics', Schmitt's insistence that conflict is something that liberal democracy exteriorises gives rise to pertinent and 'hard questions' (Hirst, 1999: 8). Mouffe follows Schmitt in placing conflict and power relations at the centre of a discussion of the political (Mouffe, 1999a, 1999b). My concern here is to examine the practices through which movements make wider spatialised power relations part of the terrain of contestation. This process of making power relations contestable is part of the ongoing conduct of political struggles, and is constitutive of their own productive power relations. This focus on activity dislocates the purified, human subject adopted by Mouffe and Schmitt. It enables the formation of maps of grievance to be formed through negotiating how collectives of humans and non humans are generated and ordered. The chapter concludes that the insights of Schmitt and Mouffe are helpful in engaging with attempts to theorise the politics of collectives of unlike actors.

## **5.2 The conditions of possibility of an equivalence: the changing maps of grievance of the Indian New Farmers Movements**

Professor Nanjundaswamy, leader of the KRRS, wrote in a communiqué publicising the KRRS's campaign to cremate Monsanto's field trials of genetically modified cotton in India that:

We know that stopping biotechnology in India will not be of much help to us if it continues in other countries, since the threats that it poses do not stop at her borders. We also think that the kind of actions that will be going on in India have the potential not only to kick

those corporate killers out of our country; if we play our cards right at global level and co-ordinate our work, these actions can also pose a major challenge to the survival of these corporations in the stock markets.

(Nanjundaswamy, 1998, circulated widely on e-mail networks)

Nanjundaswamy's communiqué envisions the solidarities between different activists struggling against biotechnology as potentially productive. It defines these solidarities as emerging through shared action against capitalist biotechnology and the key institutions shaping and producing neoliberal forms of globalisation, especially the WTO (Nanjundaswamy, 1998). The account, through its references to the role of 'corporate killers', intertwines contestation of unequal power relations with a denunciation of particular techniques for modifying living things. These solidarities are also defined through positive relations with other struggles against bio-technology and through practices which generate seeds as part of unofficial networks of exchange, rather than as patented commodities (Sahai, 1993, 2000).

Nanjundaswamy's communiqué and images of the Cremate Monsanto! action were circulated widely among activist networks throughout Europe and were the kinds of inspirational action that fed into the formation of the Caravan project. The way Nanjundaswamy hails other activists as part of a common contestation of biotechnology and neo-liberal globalisation is part of the ongoing process of shaping the kinds of international alliances that came together in the Caravan. It is through projects like the Caravan that People's Global Action, the loose grouping of many 'grassroots movements' which includes the KRRS, have adopted an innovative approach to shaping the solidarities formed in opposition to neo-liberal globalisation. They have experimented with forms of solidarity which produce and generate joint actions between movements from different political traditions. This is an attempt to produce rhizomorphic, routed and productive practices of solidarity rather than the rigid tree-like version handed down through traditions such as the socialist internationals.<sup>2</sup> These rhizomorphic solidarities produce routed forms of action which tend to work against the formation of fixed, organisational hierarchies.<sup>3</sup> These forms of equivalences and alliances between unlike actors refuse what Spivak has termed 'a homogeneous internationalism' (Spivak, 1985: 350). Their activity is productive, continually formed and can unsettle fixed identities.

While Nanjundaswamy's communiqué hails other struggles as part of the same movement, it is also significant that an understated Indian nationalism is reworked here. This is produced through his invocation of the threats of biotechnology 'not stopping at

her borders'. Nanjundaswamy's articulation of the KRRS's resistance to Monsanto as part of a transnational movement only partially unsettles the Indian nationalist identities mobilised through the previous activity of the KRRS. This partial unsettling of Indian nationalist identities had effects on the solidarities and equivalences generated through the Caravan. This section argues that the changing political action of the Indian New Farmers' Movements was an important context for the solidarities produced through the conduct of the Caravan. It argues that changes in the imagination of the maps of grievance formed through the activity of movements like the KRRS were a condition of possibility of the formation of equivalences through the ICC. The section also argues that the nationalist imaginations that have been used to shape and articulate the KRRS's maps of grievance were only partially disrupted through the KRRS's integration into transnational political alliances.

KRRS's high profile actions against Monsanto appealed directly to the practices used to contest bio-technology by activists in the UK and other parts of Western Europe. The forms of solidarity that were produced through the ICC were generated through shared involvement in particular practices of confrontational, non violent direct action (PGA, 1999a). The KRRS have been part of the translation of Gandhian practices of disobedience to contemporary struggles in the Indian countryside. Through invoking Gandhian action the KRRS have drawn not only on one of the most legitimate repertoires of Indian political activity, but also on one of the internationally renowned forms of non-violent direct action.<sup>4</sup> Their use of 'direct action' has enabled them to become part of intersections of multiple trajectories of resistance to neo-liberal globalisation. The political activity of the KRRS is also an intervention in the directions of the Indian New Farmers' Movements.

The activity of the KRRS in contesting transnational power-geometries and institutions like the *World Trade Organisation* is part of an intervention in the political identities and imaginations of power of the Indian New Farmers' movements. The New Farmers' Movements came to prominence in the 1970s and 80s. They attempted to redraw the lines of political antagonism in rural India through mobilising a distinction between the countryside or '*Bharat*' and a corrupt and exploitative urban India (Brass, 1995a, Bental and Corbridge, 1996). As Omvedt argues, '[r]ather than organising wage-earners against property owning employers they have organised entire village communities against the state' (Omvedt, 1995: 126). These movements have drawn on the practices and idioms of Gandhian mass action and on powerful symbolic narratives which celebrate an authentic Gandhian Indian countryside where the village is the appropriate unit of

political organisation. Nanjundaswamy has referred to the movement both as a 'village movement' and as 'a movement for independence' (Krishnarajulu, 1986: 31). These movements are uneven and differentiated. The support of some movements such as the Bharatia Kisan Union in Uttar Pradesh are drawn predominantly from particular caste constituencies (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996).

This articulation of rural antagonisms has been produced through non violent methods of agitation used to symbolise 'the delinking of country-city links'. The methods used to produce and articulate these maps of grievance include 'the *rasta roko* (blocking roads or cutting the links between city and village) and the *gavbandi* (forbidding politicians and bureaucrats from entering villages' (Omvedt, 1995: 126-7). These spatial practices have been mobilised to control the networks and mobilities intersecting in these villages. They have also been mobilised to create the whole village as the constituency of movements like the KRRS, rather than just farmers (Krishnarajulu, 1986: 31). These practices have had effects in terms of the everyday relations of peasants. For example, deferential practices in relation to outside officials have been eroded (Krishnarajulu, 1986: 31).

The maps of grievance constructed through the action of the KRRS have also contested the power relations that structure resource and land use. In 1982 the KRRS led mass mobilisations over granite quarrying in Bangalore district. Thousands of peasants blockaded roads to 'prevent local resources being indiscriminately looted on grossly unequal terms' (Suresh, 1986: 167). In the early 1980s the KRRS agitated against the extensive planting of Eucalyptus trees which had been planted with the aid of the World Bank. This saw 'the destruction of *lakhs* [hundreds of thousands] of seedlings of Eucalyptus in nurseries'. This agitation began to develop into a more general drive against social forestry (Suresh, *ibid.*). These mass actions around granite and eucalyptus touched on wider power geometries through contesting the role of the World Bank. More recent actions have been directly constituted through strategies which drag the wider power geometries constituted by institutions like the World Trade Organisation into the 'terrain of political contestation'. This strategy was developed through the high-profile assaults on Cargill seed factories and Kentucky Fried Chicken Outlets which were noted in chapter 3. The assault on Monsanto's field trials was explicitly linked to struggles against the WTO (Nanjundaswamy, 1998).

This contestation of wider power geometries has produced, and been produced through, 'maps of grievance' which target key neo-liberal political projects such as the Dunkel Draft of the Uruguay round of GATT. This suggests how the articulation of friend-enemy relations can be continually formed through activity. The KRRS's

vociferous opposition to the Dunkel Draft of the GATT, however, was itself a deeply contested strategy. Bentall has described the 'Dunkel Draft as a likely sea change in the future of agricultural politics of India, bringing farmers into conflict with the interests of multi-national capital' (Bentall, 1995: 269). This change has been articulated in very different ways by farmers' movements leaders. Sharad Joshi, the leader of the Maharashtra based Shetkari Sanghatana, supported the Dunkel Draft arguing that 'the interests of the Multi-National Corporations and the farmers coincide' (Joshi, interview with Bentall, 1995: 298). But alliances were formed through opposition to the Dunkel Draft between Mahendra Singh Tikait of the BKU Uttar Pradesh, Nanjundaswamy of KRRS and the BKU Punjab (Assadi, 1995a: 194).

The Caravan was a further anti market intervention in the articulation of the Farmers Movements' maps of grievance. It drew on the alliances formed in opposition to the Dunkel Draft and was defined against Farmers' leaders like Joshi who had supported liberalisation of trade. At a press conference given before the Caravan left India Nanjundaswamy made it clear that 'Sharad Joshi was not part of the group because he was insufficiently anti-market' (*Economic Times* 24-5-1999). This opposition to the position of Joshi was also made clear to me by an activist from a rival movement to the Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra which is hostile to Joshi's pro-market line.<sup>5</sup> The Caravan also continued to shape resistance to the pressure exerted by neo-liberal institutions on 'traditional' farming practices.

The opposition of the KRRS to neo-liberal projects like the Dunkel Draft was articulated through opposing the way they envision the control and regulation of seeds. The KRRS organised mass mobilisations such as the 'seed satyagraha'<sup>6</sup> in Bangalore on October 2nd 1993, attended by a *lakh* (a hundred thousand) of farmers. Speakers at the rally argued that the proposals of the Dunkel Draft to allow private companies to patent seeds 'would have devastating effects on their livelihoods in general and on their control of seeds in particular' (Rane, 1993: 2391). A declaration read out at the rally argued:

We do not recognise intellectual property rights on biological materials being granted to companies for their private profits. The knowledge on which crops to plant and on which seeds to use was evolved by generations of farmers and not by the corporations. Therefore we do not accept that they have a right to profit from our knowledge and our experience. Instead, we adhere to the concept of common property rights, where the right to seeds cannot be owned by private companies. Seeds should be allowed to be exchanged freely among farmers in the country and the world, as has been the practice till now.

(cited by Wishvas Rane, 1993: 2391).

The opposition to the proposals of patenting seeds in the Dunkel Draft was articulated through a defence and mobilisation of unofficial practices of exchange. The declaration emphasises that the seeds are more than just fixed, material goods. It articulates the importance and histories of the right to craft and intervene in practices which produce seeds as part of unofficial exchanges between farmers. It also suggests that farmers produce distinctive identities in relation to these practices and that pride is produced through the skill and knowledges crafted in relation to these non humans. This pride and independence is articulated by the KRRS as being threatened by attempts to patent seeds (Assadi, 1995a: 197).

This emphasis on the ways farmers are part of relations which generate seeds through practices of unofficial exchange contrasts starkly with the purified imagination of property relations mobilised through the Dunkel Draft. The Dunkel Draft produces static non humans as the property of private companies. This produces a purified imagination of what constitutes property relations. In this text, structured by the polarities of what Latour describes as the modern constitution, non humans are divided up as the property of specific (Western) companies.<sup>7</sup> The tone of the KRRS's opposition to the Dunkel Draft suggests that alternative forms of politics can mobilise and ratify unofficial ethical practices which have been constituted by what Latour describes as arrangement and combination (Latour, 1993: 45). These ethical practices mix up the domains which are separated by the modern constitution. This opposition to the patenting of seeds situates the seeds as 'already hybrid', as part of differentiated histories and geographies which have generated the seeds through unofficial exchanges and 'common property rights'. These political practices mobilise and generate maps of grievance which contest the spatially constructed power relations shaping new and unequal practices of regulating seeds. But the ways the regulation and power relations generating seeds were mobilised provoked some unsettling identifications.

The opposition to the Dunkel Draft was a site of connections between the KRRS and a wide network of organizations and intellectuals who were integrated into transnational routes of resistance. These included internationally renowned figures like Dr Vandana Shiva (Assadi, 1995b: 193). But there were other influences on how these 'maps of grievances' were articulated. 'Peasants' who attended the rally against the Dunkel Draft in Bangalore argued:



Our leaders have said that the foreign paper [Dunkel draft] is an evil design to sell Mother India to foreigners. For a Kisan [farmer/ peasant] the life support are his land, seed and plough. If the Rao government sells these to the foreigners what will happen to the national pride [...]

(Cited by Brass, 1995: 56n41).

Here the Kisan's land, seed and plough are articulated as 'his' 'life support'. They are also explicitly articulated to a version of Indian nationalism where the 'national pride' depends on the Kisan's relations with his 'land, seed and plough'. The contestation of patenting of seeds, here, becomes articulated through maps of grievance formed in opposition to generalised foreign others. The maps of grievance being mobilised by the KRRS could refigure nationalist identities through pitting rural India against hostile foreign forces. This may close down the possibilities of forming opposition to the Dunkel Draft in relation to non-Indian struggles against the institutions and practices of neo-liberal globalisation. Indeed, these trajectories of nationalist opposition to neo-liberal globalisation had effects on the conduct of the ICC.

The way the maps of grievance of the KRRS defined as enemies the institutions and practices of neo-liberalism was a condition of possibility of the KRRS's involvement in the Caravan. Despite the ICC being characterised by attempts to form solidarities between diverse groups struggling against globalisation the nationalist imaginaries of the Farmers' Movements were only very partially unsettled through the planning of the Caravan project. The Farmers' Movement's quite nationalist 'maps of grievance' exerted pressure on the solidarities conducted through the ICC. One of the ways these tensions emerged was through the diverse effects of the Gandhian idioms of the political activity of the KRRS on the conduct and organisation of the ICC.

The internationalist legacies of Gandhian non violent action enabled some of the equivalences formed through the ICC to be formed.<sup>8</sup> The KRRS's action is very much an intervention in Gandhian forms of politics. Their actions against multinationals have shaped and been underpinned by a theory and practice of 'Gandhian violence' (Assadi, 1995a, 1996). This 'Gandhian violence' is based on 'an analysis of the adversary' and demands that peasants 'should attack only lifeless property and not loot the destroyed property' (Assadi, 1996: 1186). These assertive forms of non-violent direct action appealed to a constituency of Western direct activists, who had experimented with similar definitions of non-violent action which included the destruction of legitimised targets of 'lifeless property'. Through these acts the KRRS have creatively reworked some of the

political practices of the Gandhian political tradition. But legacies of this tradition which were more contested through the Caravan project were also reworked by the KRRS.

Firstly, the KRRS and other farmers' movements such as the BKU have mobilised a Gandhian version of the 'village' which downplays inequalities and power relations within the countryside (Assadi, 1995a). Bentall has demonstrated that the BKU in western Uttar Pradesh have mobilised a specific constituency of Jat caste, middle peasants, and has tended to be held in suspicion by both wealthier and poorer members of rural communities (Bentall, 1995). The BKU leader Mahendra Singh Tikait is the leader of the second most powerful Jat Hindu clan in Western Uttar Pradesh (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 32). The activity of some members of the BKU has also involved intimidation and even murder of Harijan labourers involved in the Mazdoor Union (labourers union) in western Uttar Pradesh (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 41, see also Lerche, 1999: 192). Lindberg argues that Farmers' Movements are 'dominated by an emerging agrarian bourgeoisie of rich peasants and capitalist farmers which mobilise part of the middle peasantry with a rhetoric that hides their real intentions' (Lindberg, 1995: 119, see also Brass, 1995a: 18).

Omvedt argues against this dismissal of the Farmers' Movements. She argues it is wrong to assume *a priori* that the demands they make are only in the interests of this narrow section of the middle peasantry (Omvedt, 1995: 128). She argues that 'the real agrarian capitalist is not the 20 acre farmer hiring labour to seek the standard of living of a low-grade bank employee, but the agro-businessman marketing seeds and fertiliser' (Omvedt, 1991: 2288). There are also histories of political parties/ movements in India mobilising diverse rural political constituencies. Duncan argues that the strategy of the Lok Dal party before 1985 in Uttar Pradesh successfully brought together 'the diverse interests of different castes, of different regions, and of peasants and farmers deriving very different levels of benefit from participation in agricultural development' through 'articulating new interests and aspirations' (Duncan, 1997: 265). But there remain tensions within the ways that the Farmers' Movements engage with rural inequality that are partly suppressed due to the kinds of Gandhian constructions of the village mobilised through their political activity. As chapter 3 argued, some of these constructions of the undivided Indian countryside became relationally constituted and reproduced through the rhetoric and activity of the ICC. But there was also contestation of these inequalities with some Western activists expressing anger that farmers from Gujarat involved in the Caravan were campaigning against a ceiling on the size of land holdings.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, the anti-urbanism of Gandhian thought and action pervasively structures

these movements.<sup>10</sup> The undifferentiated version of the countryside they mobilise emerges from this anti-urbanism. It locates the sources of inequality outside of the countryside. Movements like MST have actively campaigned against the way that 'the vested economic interests of multinational corporations' must be challenged so as 'to advance and consolidate the democratization of wealth and power in the countryside' (MST, 2001: 157). But these connections between outside interrelations and inequalities within the countryside are not brought to the fore in the rhetoric of the Indian Farmers' Movements (see Assadi, 1995b). This anti-urbanism had effects on the organisational structure of the ICC. A powerful constituency of Indian urban political movements including movements organising slum dwellers in Delhi and against Union Carbide were active in the globally coordinated actions against the World Trade Organisation on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1999. But urban movements were absent from the sizeable Indian contingent of the Caravan.

Thirdly, a powerful legacy of Gandhian political action is the construction of charismatic leaders within the New Farmers' Movements. The leadership styles of Nanjundaswamy of the KRRS and Mahendra Singh Tikait of the BKU are constituted in relation to histories of male, charismatic 'non-leaders' within the Gandhian mould (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 42). Their conduct has affinities with the way that Gandhi defined political utopia as 'a patriarchy in which the ruler, by his moral quality and habitual adherence to truth, always expresses the collective will', rather than through advocating 'participation by every member of the polity' (Chatterjee, 1984: 165). This construction of leadership is related to the Gandhian construction of Truth as universal, unchanging and outside of history (Chatterjee, 1984: 167). Charisma, as Weber suggested, depends for its reproduction on the recognition of authority (Weber, 1968: 242). The recognition demanded by charismatic leadership is relationally constituted and continually formed rather than simply flowing from the innate qualities of leaders.<sup>11</sup>

Understanding how this recognition is continually formed is important. Leaders like Nanjundaswamy and Tikait have only been partially successful in reproducing their legitimacy and the legitimacy of their movements. Bentall's (1995) field work in Western Uttar Pradesh in the early 1990s suggested that BKU members were increasingly suspicious of and for the first time becoming actively hostile to the leadership of Tikait. Lerche argues that, by the mid 1990s, the BKU in Uttar Pradesh had disintegrated (Lerche, 1999: 216). The KRRS's strategy of Gandhian violence has lost them support in the countryside, and there was active opposition by some Karnataka farmers to the Cremate Monsanto! action (Assadi, 1996: 1186, Panini, 1998: 2169, see also Omvedt's critique of the action, Omvedt, 1998). (Nanjundaswamy's poor showing in the 1999

parliamentary election in his Karnataka constituency is also suggestive of this crisis of support.) The flirtation of Farmers' Movements with electoral strategies, including the BKU's brief alliance with the Hindu nationalist BJP, have led to a loss of legitimacy (Bentall and Corbridge, 1996: 44, see also Mukherij, 1998). This strategy has made it more difficult for these movements to clearly differentiate themselves from established political processes. *The Hindustan Times* of 24<sup>th</sup> May 1999 argued that the farmers were taking the struggle to Europe through the Inter-Continental Caravan, having failed to halt economic liberalisation at home. This interpretation of the Caravan and the legitimisation crisis of their movements suggests that the increasing international strategy of the Nanjundaswamy-Tikait grouping can be read as a strategy of re-invention as well as a tracing of and contestation of the power relations of neo-liberalism.

This strategy depended on recognition of their legitimacy, and the legitimacy of their movements, by the diverse Western European green and social justice activists involved in the Caravan. These alliances were established through the changing friend-enemy relations established through the activity of Farmers' Movements like the KRRS. The next section examines how the formation of these equivalences was negotiated through the Caravan. It argues that the histories of the Farmers' Movement's political activity mattered and had effects. But it also argues that productive tensions emerged through the formation of equivalences through the Caravan.

### **5.3 The Construction of Maps of Grievance and the Formation of Friend-Enemy Identifications**

The ethic of political friendship which emerged from the support networks of the Zapatistas produced attempts to generate solidarities through shared actions against the practices and institutions of neo-liberal globalisation. These solidarities were to be decentralised and characterised by confrontational, non-violent direct action. The formation of the semi-organisational apparatus of People's Global Action was part of an ongoing attempt to formalise some of these alliances and to draw them together into a more defined, collective project. The Caravan was one of the first major projects convened by PGA, which in 1999 played an important role in the demonstrations against the WTO in Seattle. Transforming the unofficial alliances and friendships into a more defined and productive organisational process through the Caravan was contested and difficult. These processes suggest how the friend-enemy relations that defined the Caravan were not given,

but were constructed and contested through the activity and organisation of the project. This section also argues that these processes of the formation and negotiation of equivalences were productive.

The KRRS had built a reputation among European activist networks as a formidable and innovative mass organisation and movement. This had been achieved through the widespread circulation of images and reports of the 'laughing arsonists' torching of Monsanto's trial fields of genetically modified cotton in Karnataka. This action consolidated their reputation for formidable direct action formed through earlier widely publicised actions against Cargill seed factories and Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets. The imagery of their actions was used by activists such as London based *Reclaim the Streets* (RTS). RTS publicity for the June 18th action in the City in 1999 used a photo montage of a large mobilisation of Indian Farmers cut so that they appeared to be marching through the centre of the City of London. The KRRS was seen by London activists as an organisation with its 'credentials intact' (Townes, 1999).

This recognition and identification with the KRRS emerged most strongly from common involvement in non-violent direct actions against biotechnology. The London Welcoming Committee was predominantly drawn from a constituency of activists involved in the London based group *Reclaim the Streets* (RTS) and wider campaigns against genetic modification and biotechnology. These campaigns had utilised forms of direct action, such as the destruction of test sites of genetically modified crops. KRRS's actions had been an important source of inspiration to many resistance movements against biotechnology and there was excitement at the possibility of working with these Indian activists. Common enemies emerged through these actions, as both KRRS and European direct activists became involved in actions against Monsanto and institutions like the WTO. The emergence of these common enemies was part of changes in the maps of grievance of London based activists as well as those of Indian movements. RTS had shaped an increasingly anti-neo-liberal political imagination which contrasted strongly with some of the more directly anti-state imaginations prevalent in some of the early struggles of the anti-roads movement. KRRS's involvement in practices of direct action was crucial in giving it legitimacy among wider activist networks. This differentiated its political practices from the Indian non-governmental organisation sector which was discussed in very hostile terms in the London Welcoming Committee meetings. One activist with experience of Nepali alternative politics described the Indian NGO sector as 'basically corrupt'.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the existence of substantial identification with, and support for, the KRRS,

forming alliances and joint actions with them was a contested process. Tensions around the style of Nanjundaswamy's leadership emerged through the ongoing, organisational work of the London Welcoming Committee. The hierarchical style of his leadership was disliked by many activists in the London group, who almost all came out of a politics which was deeply hostile to and suspicious of formal, organised hierarchies. But it was Nanjundaswamy's conduct, as much as his formal position as leader of KRRS, which was contested. He acted as the only mediating point between Indian movements and the different European Welcoming Committees. It was Nanjundaswamy who accessed KRRS's email and discussed aspects of the organisation of the Caravan by phone with European activists. It was Nanjundaswamy who put pressure on calls from the Dutch Welcoming Committee to downsize the project so as to make it more manageable (Do or Die, 1999: 29).

The contestations over how shared political action should be made with the KRRS were often carried out in a fractious and bitter manner. They produced, and intersected with, uneasy tensions in the meetings, tensions which were often exacerbated by poor organisation.<sup>13</sup> One of the most forceful personalities within the group attempted to close down discussion of the questions over the nature of the KRRS and the conduct of Swamy<sup>14</sup> and difficulties over procuring visas. He felt that people coming to the meetings questioning the political credentials of KRRS and asking about the Indians' politics were obstructive. He argued there was more important and pressing organisational work to be done. He argued that it wasn't our role to evaluate the actions of the Indians and it was almost racist to contest what the Indians were doing. In later meetings when the Caravan was about to leave for Europe he played on a particular image of Swamy as 'this poor, overworked old man' getting up early to travel round India gathering up people for the Caravan.<sup>15</sup> Some of this rhetoric and imagery suggests the influence of the orientalism of much 'hippy' culture on how these alliances were imagined.<sup>16</sup>

Others in the group were more critical of Swamy. They argued that he was overworked precisely because of his refusal to delegate responsibility within the organisation. At one meeting there was an attempt to use problems over the obtaining of visas for the KRRS to completely re-shape the project. Proposals were made to quickly try and construct a smaller project drawn from movements such as Movimento Sem Terra and small Nepali movements which would bypass the Indian New Farmers Movements. Activists argued this re-orientation would make the project more plural as it would be less dominated by Indian movements and that it would mean there was not 'a control freak like Swamy' at the centre of it.<sup>17</sup> This hostility to Swamy suggests that he failed to relationally reconstitute

his charismatic authority through involvement in transnational activist networks. The impossibility of completely reorienting the project in the two months before it happened, however, suggests that arguments in favour of concentrating on organising the project as it was were far more pragmatic.

These proposals for a change in the orientation of the project emerged from an attempt to deal with the two main lines of contestation that emerged through the organisational process. Firstly, the unequal gender division that was proposed for the Indian delegation of the Caravan: women were making up less than a quarter of the 400 strong delegation. Secondly, Nanjundaswamy's insistence that the Caravan had to have at least 400 participants drawn from Indian movements. Tensions about the unequal gender composition of the caravan were raised by many involved in the project. These included an activist who had recently returned from making a video in India about actions against genetic engineering. She had taken out a list of questions to ask Swamy to help clarify organisational issues about the movements that would make up the Indian contingent of the Caravan and about the Caravan's gender composition. But rather than gaining accurate and complete answers she was frustrated with what she saw as an unpleasant evasiveness of Swamy. She argued he had been 'refusing to answer' questions about the composition of the Caravan.<sup>18</sup>

Her anger intersected with difficulties in getting enough material together from KRRS to make the project viable. One of the activists who had provided space for the Welcoming Meetings at Strike, commented at an evaluation of the project in late October, that the main problem with the project was 'the lack of information coming from India'.<sup>19</sup> This lack of exchange of information had two main impacts. Firstly, it made it difficult to have a strong sense of the make up of the Indian delegation of the Caravan. This made it difficult to discuss the involvement of some of the organisations beyond KRRS that formed part of the Caravan. I was unaware, for example, of the involvement of Mahendra Singh Tikait, until I was in Cologne and would have raised questions about Tikait's conduct and politics if I had known he was to be part of the Caravan. Secondly, it made it difficult to have the necessary information and documentation to support the visa applications and to have confidence that they were in process. This made it hard to get behind and believe in the project in a very committed way. This commitment was necessary for involvement in the planning of such an ambitious project.

The planning of the Caravan was also damaged by a vehement critique of the project by the prominent Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva which was circulated widely on e-mail networks. This revered and internationally renowned figure dissociated herself

from the ICC in the harshest possible terms. She argued that most of the 'so called 500 farmers who will be travelling to Europe as part of the "Caravan" are basically Bank officials, pesticides and seed agents and commission agents' (Shiva, 1999). The impact of Shiva's comments was on a much broader constituency than the small circle of people involved in organising the Caravan. The circulation of the e-mail had a major effect in discrediting the ICC in the activist networks which it was necessary to mobilise if the project was going to work. Her critique was considered seriously within the meetings. Partly responding to Shiva's criticisms, one activist commented that it was obvious it was not 'going to be the perfect Caravan', but it was still an exciting project. Others were harsher in their criticism of Shiva, seeing her as 'out of order' for circulating such a vehement critique. Discussions in the meetings situated Shiva's critique as part of long standing 'personality' and 'ego' clashes between Shiva and Swamy. This clash coalesced around a power struggle for the leadership and control of the Indian anti-globalisation movement that was being constituted in relation to transnational activist networks.

The tensions that emerged through the organisational work of the Caravan suggest that the charismatic authority of Nanjundaswamy and the KRRS was only partially reproduced through transnational activist networks. Tensions in the project, and within the London Welcoming Committee, led to some of the events organised while the Caravan was in London being tense and chaotic. There was considerable anger and resentment, at a Public Hearing organised for the activists from the Caravan in Friends Meeting House, on 28th May, that the Indian and Nepali activists only spoke after lunch, as speakers from British movements had overrun their time slots. But there were moments within the events of the Caravan where these tensions were exceeded and powerful and productive solidarities were produced and performed. One of the key ways that the Caravan was productive and innovative was that it placed opposition to genetic modification of organisms at the intersection of different routes of activity and resistance.

Haraway has argued that she 'cannot help but hear in the biotechnology debates the unintended tones of fear of the alien and suspicion of the mixed' (Haraway, 1997: 61). She argues that the mobilisation of 'intrinsic natures' in these debates reproduces a 'purity akin to the doctrines of white racial hegemony' and gives 'short shrift' to the 'mixed up history of living beings' (ibid.). The interactions of the ICC opened up the possibility of locating a politics around genetic modification at the intersection of potentially unsettling routes of activity. For as chapter 3 argued, the ICC was not mobilised around a consensual version of the 'environment'. The process brought together activists who constructed their identities through diverse and contested relations and practices with non-humans. These



different practices cut across the groups who were brought together through the ICC, and suggested the possibility of unsettling the problematic identifications Haraway has argued have been made in biotechnology debates (on the opposition to mixing and impurity in UK protests against GM food, see Bingham, forthcoming).

Different practices in relations with non-humans emerged through the activities of the Caravan such as the visit to a squatted GM test site near Bishop Stortford in Hertfordshire. GM activists had squatted the site and destroyed the part of the maize crop that had been cordoned off for testing. They greeted the Caravan with fine Irish tunes as we crossed fields to meet them. But activists from the Punjab BKU with whom we walked across the fields talked in very different terms about their resistance to GM crops. They argued that the wheat that was growing in the fields around us was far thinner and less productive than the wheat they grew on their small 10-20 acre holdings. Though they were adamantly opposed to GM varieties of crops they talked about using pesticides on their crops and were strongly in support of them. They talked about how pesticides were necessary to produce successful yields.

This 'productivist' tone of some of the farmers' stories had quite unsettling effects. Some UK activists assumed the Indians' would practice only traditional farming techniques.<sup>20</sup> These different attitudes to agricultural practices were the source of debate. There was questioning, in a fairly non hostile way, as to whether India had any movements in direct support of 'organic' forms of agriculture. This suggests that these issues were brought into debate and contestation through these interactions. This opened up the possibility of creatively unsettling how resistance practices towards genetic modification were conducted. The slogans used by Indian activists in demonstrations in London, such as 'no patents on life', spoke far more to a contestation of the patent systems that genetically modified plants were part of than to a concern at the threat of 'mixing' and of a disruption of the imagined 'purity' of the plants they used.

It was unclear to what extent these exchanges had effects. But they took place within the emergence of some powerful, inspiring interactions. The Indian activists showed their support for the action of uprooting the GM crops through watering in organic seedlings on the site where GM maize had been up-rooted. There were also exchanges of stories and music. A traveller involved in the crop squat sang about the resistance to colonialism in Ireland. A Punjabi farmer countered by singing a song about the Punjabi anti-colonial resistance, which I accompanied on the cittern. The introduction he and others gave to the song situated it as part of the history of their present struggles. Through doing this they explicitly hailed us as part of shared struggles against new forms of colonialism. These

interactions suggest some of the productive, exciting and passionate moments of the activity and conduct of these solidarities. They were certainly articulated as such by some of the Indian activists. One Indian activist present at the crop squat argued:

We have not even dreamt that people of this part of the world, the peasants and the poor people of Europe would join us in our struggle against the multi nationals. With this we are not only happy, we are strengthened, empowered and we assure you we'll double our fight.

(cited by Do or Die 1999: 98).

Some of the alliances that were formed through the Caravan, however, were constituted in direct opposition to the pro-agricultural development politics of organisations like the BKU.<sup>21</sup> Discussions between Nepali activists from INHURED (International Institute for Human Rights, Environment and Development) and the members of the Brighton based cooking collective, the Anarchist Teapot, were constituted through common adherence to an explicitly anti-development politics. Their discussions centred on the political practices being used and developed in the mass mobilisations against big development projects, particularly dams (Do or Die, 1999: 209-215). But it was also significant that some activists I spoke to found their adherence to an anti-development politics unsettled by discussions with Indian activists. An Australian activist argued that meeting up and talking with the Indian farmers had challenged her views about the outright rejection of processes of development.<sup>22</sup> Similar points were made by a French activist writing in the first ICC newsletter (ICC, 1999a). The forms of commonality mobilised by the ICC could thus be more diverse and multiple than is suggested by a fixed notion of a common good, pre-existing the formation of these political alliances.

The process enabled the rubbing up together of quite different activist identities and traditions in productive ways. This process was not uncontested. One of the productive aspects of the project was that some of the tensions which emerged through the conduct of the Caravan were brought into the terrain of contestation. Contestations of the status of gender relations and the reproduction of particularistic nationalist identities were brought to the fore in some of the evaluations of the project. The contested processes through which solidarities were formed were productive in defining and experimenting with some of the terms of an explicitly internationalist anti-neo-liberal-globalisation politics. These concerns led to the adoption of the following political statement at the Second Gathering of People's Global Action in Bangalore.

"We reject all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all creeds. We embrace the full dignity of all human beings".

(PGA, 1999b).

The bringing together of different activist cultures was a process that was generative of debate, negotiation and contestation rather than a simple coming together of homogeneous action or pre-existing wills. One of the outcomes of the Caravan project was this attempt to think about the construction of a counter-globalisation politics that took seriously the challenges of nationalisms and unequal gender relations.

The formation of the Caravan was a long and difficult process, which allowed some of the fissures and differences in terms of constructions of an internationalist anti-globalisation movement to emerge in ways which perhaps shorter more intense bursts of activity like the action against the WTO in Seattle do not. The way some of these fissures and differences became the subject of contestation illustrates that the acts of bringing together different political movements will not be an easy process structured around pre-existing political wills. The formation of friend-enemy identifications was not something that neatly pre-existed the activity. Further, the forms of political identities that different activists brought to these interactions had effects on how they were conducted. The next section begins to discuss the maps of grievance formed through the conduct of the ICC, and some of the actions of London coal-heavers in 1768. It discusses the effects these maps of grievance had on the political activity and identities that emerged through these actions.

#### **5.4 The construction of maps of grievance: making power-geometries contestable**

Mouffe has argued that rather than 'erasing the traces of power and exclusion' a radical democratic politics requires us to bring such traces 'to the fore' (Mouffe, 2000: 33-4). The activity of movements like the ICC emphasise that the work of rendering spatially stretched relations of power part of the terrain of contestation is itself a process which is constituted by struggle. Political activity and struggle is needed to bring these traces of power and exclusion to the fore and to render them contestable. The 'maps of grievance' crafted and produced through political activity are part of this work of making power-geometries contestable. This section discusses some of the spatial practices through which

power-geometries are rendered contestable, and argues that the way these power-geometries are related to and imagined has effects on the kinds of political identities formed through particular struggles.

One of the most contested aspects of the planning of the Caravan in the London Welcoming Committee meetings arose from discussions relating to where in London the Caravan should be involved in action. These tensions emerged partly because some of the Indian participants of the Caravan had expressed an interest in holding a demonstration outside parliament. These proposals spoke to the deep symbolic significance the British Parliament had for their histories of political activity. This idea, and subsequent proposals, to hold a demonstration outside parliament, were fiercely contested. This made issues of how and where wider relations of power could be made contestable central to the political identities being shaped through the Caravan project.

The idea of holding a protest outside parliament met with considerable hostility from the London Welcoming committee. One activist argued that to protest at Parliament was to miss the point, because it was no longer government that controlled things but multi nationals.<sup>23</sup> She also argued that because we were doing the work of organising the Caravan in the UK they would have to fit into our analysis of politics. This point raised criticism for refusing to incorporate the ideas of Indians into the planning of the project. But the hostility to making a protest at Parliament was widespread. A position emerged that it would be much more desirable to march and construct actions in the City as this was where the 'real power' was located. At later meetings a British Asian activist spoke of this march through London to the key sites of power of the City as invoking the Gandhian non violent practices of the salt marches.<sup>24</sup> The City was seen as the part of London which was intertwined with the Indians' lives through processes of globalisation. The orientation of action towards contesting the financial power of the City and away from the centres of 'political' power produced a politics that accepted key claims of proponents of contemporary neo-liberal globalisation. It was structured by accepting claims that the nation state was no longer relevant. This analysis was coproduced through the process of forming the maps of grievance of the ICC.

These debates were re-opened later in the organisation of the Caravan, after Jeremy Corbyn MP and Stan Newens MEP invited the Caravan to a fairly small reception at the Houses of Parliament.<sup>25</sup> Corbyn and Newens had sponsored the project to improve the chances of the Indian activists receiving visas. The fierce contestation over whether or not to attend this reception went beyond deep suspicions that the politicians would try to make some sort of political capital out of it, or that the media coverage of such an event

would be difficult to control. Strongly held arguments were put forward that any action at parliament was contrary to the spirit of the Caravan and that attendance would confer on parliament a false legitimacy. This position rubbed up against other stances in the group. A genetix activist argued that it was an opportunity which could be exploited rather than simply a problem. He argued against a simple dismissal of Parliament, arguing it still had a role in legislation over genetic engineering.

These contestations over where the action should happen illustrate some of the effects that the construction of maps of grievance have on the ways different routes of political activity are 'properly brought together'. The political identities of the action were negotiated through contesting how wider power-geometries should be related to and imagined. Spatial practices also emerged through the conduct and action of the Caravan which suggests how adversaries can be quickly defined and contested through political activity.

On the first full day the Caravan was in London, *The Nuffield Council on Bioethics* released its report evaluating the ethical and social issues of genetically modified crops. The report concluded that there was a 'moral imperative' for research and development of genetically modified crops because of their potential 'to conquer world hunger' (*Guardian* 28-5-'99, Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 1999). The line of the report provoked outrage among UK activists present at the public hearing of the Caravan at Friends House on Euston Road. Many of these activists had been long standing participants in the actions against GM crop sites. Genetix activists quickly organised an action to contest the Council's unequivocal support for such biotechnology.

Indian, Nepali and UK activists came out of the Hall at Friends Meeting House on Euston Road and made the short walk to the Nuffield Foundation in Bedford Square. We gathered outside the Foundation's building and watched and chanted as some of the Indian delegation and a small number of UK activists jostled past bemused security guards into the building. Fifty to hundred of us gathered outside the Foundation's headquarters waiting for the delegation to emerge. Musicians from the radical group Seize the Day! performed their anti Monsanto anthem 'Food 'n' Health 'n' Hope'. The Indian activists contested the uncritical version of relations with the South/ Third World which had been mobilised in the report to support the development of biotechnology. They also criticised the way that although the Third World had been powerfully mobilised in the report, Third World perspectives had been absent from the expert process and panel which had formulated the report's line. The delegation told the Nuffield Foundation that:

We will not let your corporations justify genetic engineering with the lie that it will alleviate the suffering, dispossession and poverty that these same corporations are responsible for.

(Cited by Do or Die, 1999: 98).

The Indians asked for a consultancy fee for their advice. When they emerged there was chanting of anti-WTO slogans on the steps of the Nuffield Foundation, connecting the action to a wider critique of neo-liberal globalisation.

In terms of media coverage this was an event which had a low profile. But it brought vehement opposition to the report to the Foundation's headquarters. It dragged this organisation, which through its report had deftly constructed itself as a 'neutral and objective body', into a terrain of active political contestation. The character of this contestation was distinctively located at the intersections of routes of political activity. It produced a challenge to the stories about the South being mobilised through the report, rather than articulating genetic modification as a threat to an imagined purity of intrinsic natures. The friend-enemy relations here were constituted through rapid action against an emerging enemy. This was a productive practice enabling militant political identities to come together at this site of grievance.

If, as Mouffe has argued, one of the basic tenets of radical politics is 'the definition of an adversary', then the practices through which adversaries are isolated and defined is a key question in any understanding of how movements create political agency (Mouffe, 1998: 13). The political agency of the ICC here was constituted through spatial practices which attempted to make visible and contestable wider relations of power. This agency was produced from the circulation and formation of 'practical-moral knowledges' about the Nuffield Foundation and its report. This is an example of how an adversary was defined very quickly and how activist networks were mobilised to contest it through spatial practices which attempted to localise and make contestable wider power relations at this key site. The formation of very specific maps of grievance and the mobilisation of action in relation to them was also central to the practices through which coal heavers and Whiteboys constructed their politics, although they mobilised very different styles of action.

In April of 1768 Irish Coal heavers gathered at night and assaulted with stones, howling and gunfire the Roundabout Tavern, run by John Green, an Undertaker in the London coal trade. Green worked for the agent appointed by Alderman Beckford to

restructure the labour relations of coal heaving. Green had publicly advertised for labourers to break the combinations in the Coal heaving trade, and was organising labour outside of these combinations from this tavern (Shelton, 1973: 174-6). The assault on Green's tavern could seem an arbitrary, spontaneous event. But Green's evidence to the trial of eight coal heavers accused of the assault on his house suggests it was an event with a clear history and that, far from being random or spontaneous, this assault was sanctioned by clear legitimising notions. Green noted that a month before the coal heavers assaulted his house 'a great many of them threatened they would pull my house down; they said I had better be quiet or they would do me; [...] They went away, some howling, some hallooing, and some pointing to me' (Proceedings, 1768: 245). He also remarked that the coal heavers assembled 'four or five times before ever they attacked me' (ibid).

These were violent forms of action, but they had histories and specificity. The specificity and history of the build up of the assault on Green's tavern supports Thompson's argument that the targets of the eighteenth century crowd were characterised by particularity: 'it was this miller, this dealer [...] who provoke [d] indignation and action' (Thompson 1991: 212) The Whiteboys' and coal heavers' threats and actions were usually against particular individuals (or their relatives, property or animals), but they targeted individuals who were integrated into wider networks of power and thus their actions could have non-intentional effects elsewhere. The actions of Whiteboys and coal heavers were held together by the gathering and circulation of unofficial knowledges about who was a corrupt agent; who was outside of combinations; who was a tyrannical landlord or middleman. The contestation of the conduct of particular actors was crucially important in the processes through which they defined their adversaries. Although their acts against their adversaries were often constituted through a particularity of grievance the action created around such particularisms did not necessarily just have local and immediate effects or implications. Green, for example, was related to the networks of corrupt relations between Undertakers in London and coal dealers in Newcastle<sup>26</sup>. His employer, Alderman Beckford, was a hub of the corrupt West India interest (Fryer, 1984: 48). There are thus shifting relations between particularity and wider networks of power in the action of the coal heavers and Whiteboys here.

The political action taken by the ICC and the coal heavers was defined through the ways that institutions and individuals are defined as enemies, and are rendered contestable through that activity. The kinds of legitimising notions mobilised in these different acts are very different, as are the idioms of collective action mobilised in each. The violence of the coal heavers contrasts with the defining non-violence and carnivalesque forms of

territorialisation utilised by the ICC. It would be wrong to suggest that the maps of grievance constructed through these actions somehow intersect with and express the true interests of the ICC or coal heavers. But it is equally wrong to see these actions as arbitrary or spontaneous.<sup>27</sup> The construction of friend-enemy relations through the formations of maps of grievance is ongoing and unfinished. This necessitates theorising such relations in a way that can focus on the constructedness of these grievances, but that can also account for their histories and specificity.

For activists can bring specific conceptions and histories of maps of grievance to events. One of the key tensions of the conduct of the ICC was the way that the Indian farmers' movements brought to the Caravan histories of opposing neo-liberal globalisation through particularist, nationalist discourses. Some of these discourses were partially unsettled through the process. But they also exerted pressure on the kinds of maps of grievance that were constructed through the activity of the ICC. While the ICC were in London there was a proposal to join a CND picket outside the Indian embassy in London to protest at India's continued involvement in nuclear testing. This proposal met with extreme hostility from one of the Indian activists, who vehemently opposed the idea of protesting against India having nuclear weapons.<sup>28</sup> This opposition closed down the possibility of engaging the Caravan in joint action at this protest. These aspects of the conduct of the ICC suggest that identification in terms of the practices of the political being deployed did not necessarily produce identification in the forms of political identity being crafted through these joint actions. And further, that these different political identities could become articulated in hostile, antagonistic ways.

This emphasises that movements do not 'spontaneously converge' through the formation of solidarities (Mouffe, 1993: 18). There are often bitter contestations about which aspects of power-geometries are rendered contestable and how. Here I have begun to argue that making spatially stretched power relations part of the terrain of contestation, is a process of struggle, rather than something which happens spontaneously. I have also begun to illustrate how political alliances were formed through the ICC through shared identification with the practices like non-violent direct action through which power relations are made contestable. This suggests how activity can generate alliances, rather than alliances being determined by adherence to a prior political philosophy. This problematises Mouffe's argument that political philosophies can stake out the limits within which equivalences are formed and negotiated (Mouffe 1993: 19). For acknowledging the generative character of political activity necessitates a stress on how practical-moral knowledges are continually formed and negotiated through political



activity. This threatens the idea that political philosophies can set the limits within which political activities like the formation of equivalences are conducted. But some of the conduct of the ICC also threatens the idea that identifications in terms of shared involvement in political practices are necessarily durable or progressive. The next section uses a conversation between spatial thinking and the work of Schmitt and Mouffe to engage with these tensions.

### **5.5 Friend-enemy relations and the constitutive role of spatiality**

Carl Schmitt (1963: 26) in his essay *The Concept of the Political* argues that ‘the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.’ Answering his own complaint about the elusiveness of ‘a clear definition of the political’, he situates conflict and adversarial relations at the very centre of a theory of the political.

The political is the most intense and extreme antagonism, and every concrete antagonism becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the extreme point, that of the friend enemy grouping.

(Schmitt, 1963: 29).

Here Schmitt reconfigures conflict between different friend-enemy groupings as constitutive of the political relation. He also sets up a more troubling identification here. His positive stress on the intensity of antagonism suggests that as the forms of antagonism become more extreme, the forms of political relations being constituted correspondingly increase in terms of their purity and desirability. Schmitt's move in refiguring collective forms of conflict as central to understandings of politics is an explicit challenge to versions of pluralism which seek to place conflict outside of politics. His account of the centrality of the friend enemy relation to politics was formulated as a critique of the versions of pluralism developed by writers like G.D.H. Cole and Harold Laski.

For Schmitt the versions of pluralism developed theoretically by Cole and Laski and practically by liberalism deny the specificity of the political. Schmitt argues that such versions of pluralism exteriorise the collective forms of conflict signified by the formation of friend-enemy relations. The result of Cole and Laski's versions of pluralism is:

nothing else than a revocable service for individuals and their free associations. One association is played off against another and all questions and conflicts are decided by

individuals [...] The ever present possibility of a friend-and-enemy grouping suffices to forge a decisive entity which transcends the mere societal-associational groupings.

(Schmitt, 1963: 45).

Schmitt's critique of liberal pluralism's reduction of politics to negotiations between individuals permits a focus on the collective formation of political identities and procedures. His stress on the formation of friend-enemy groupings emphasises that conflict cannot be simply eroded or transcended but will always constitute a challenge to political institutions and procedures. These insights challenge political theories and practices which focus solely on the role of atomistic individuals and which see adversary as a political relation which can be eliminated or transcended. Schmitt, however, deals inadequately with questions of how the political collectivities signified by friend-enemy groupings are constituted.

His account of how friend-enemy relations are constituted has recourse to vague, uncritical terms such as 'a people'<sup>29</sup> (Schmitt, 1963: 53). He also reifies the moment of conflict viewing non-violent forms of political mediation as a kind of degradation of politics (Schmitt, 1963: 33). He argues that a 'pacified globe' would be 'a world without politics' (Schmitt, 1963: 35). Schmitt's stress on the necessity of a homogeneous version of the people leads him to reject any notion of pluralism out of a belief that it 'could [not] take place without destroying [...] the political itself' (Schmitt, 1963: 45). He articulates his critique of liberal democracy to an outright rejection of pluralism, refusing to engage with how a politics that accepts pluralistic political identities might also take account of the constitutive role of conflict. Mouffe engages with this tension between Schmitt's stress on the constitutive role of conflict in the formation of the political and his rejection of pluralism. She describes this rejection of pluralism as a refusal to see that there can be 'legitimate dissent among friends' (Mouffe, 1999a: 5).

She argues that taking seriously Schmitt's insight concerning the centrality of friend-enemy groupings to politics might 'force us to come to terms with an aspect of democratic politics that liberalism tends to eliminate' (Mouffe, 1999b: 39). She uses such questioning to critique emergent versions of politics which have constructed themselves as 'a politics without adversary' (Mouffe, 2000: 108-128). She argues against the tendency of New Labour, and associated theorists like Giddens, to evade the constitutive role of power. This reduces the political to negotiation of differences between actors with fixed identities. As I argued in chapter 4, other very different political practices like the

Planning for Real process can also be structured by this evasion. It is in response to these positions that she makes the argument that is central to the argument of this thesis that the 'traces of power and exclusion' must be rendered part of the terrain of contestation of the political.

The discussion of the spatial practices of the ICC above have sought to demonstrate that political activity can construct agency through the process of making spatially stretched power relations part of the terrain of contestation. Examining how these power relations are made part of the terrain of contestation can permit a focus on the practices through which the political collectivities of friend-enemy groupings are constituted. These lines of contestation and friendship are generated and continually formed through political activity, rather than merely playing out already constituted friend-enemy relations.

Developing an argument about the spatial practices through which friend-enemy relations are constituted demands dislocating the key shared terms of debate that structure Mouffe's adversarial engagement with Schmitt. There are some very striking differences in tone and analysis between Mouffe and Schmitt. But there are some key terms of debate that Mouffe and Schmitt broadly share. I want to engage with these shared terms of debate to stress how friend-enemy relations are constructed through ongoing and contested political activity. Mouffe and Schmitt share an agreement that the fixed container of the nation-state (or assemblages of nation-states) is the arena where friend-enemy relations are constructed, an insistence on the negative construction of identities, an insistence on 'the conceptual autonomy of the political' and a specifically human version of what constitutes a political actor and a political relation.

The discussion of the shifting relations of friendship and grievance of the Indian New Farmers' movements earlier in this chapter illustrated that friend-enemy relations and groupings are not fixed and predetermined before political activity mobilises them. They have emphasised that these friend-enemy relations produced specific maps of grievance through their activity. This places questions about the maps of grievance constructed through political activity at the centre of a discussion of friend-enemy relations. Maps of grievance are productive and allow militant particularist action to move and make webs of power relations contestable. The political agency of the ICC was partly constituted through attempting to make the relations of power of neo-liberal globalisation visible and contestable. Although it should be remembered that the way KRRS's opposition to neo-liberal globalisation had been formed through relations with exceptionalist forms of Indian nationalism had effects on the kinds of friendships and alliances formed through this process.

The movement of friend-enemy relations between different spatial domains is a tension which haunts Schmitt's discussion of friend-enemy relations. For however strictly Schmitt tries to fix and align the friend-enemy relation to an equivalence with a specific territorial or juridical assemblage, the relation moves both beyond and within these alignments. Derrida argues that Schmitt 'at one and the same time, privilege[s] the State (even if he does not reduce the political to it), base[s] the concept of enemy on the possibility of war between states and nevertheless symmetrically align [s] [...] exterior war and civil war as if the enemy were sometimes the foreigner sometimes the fellow citizen' (Derrida, 1994: 121). The way Derrida teases out the different domains through which Schmitt constructs friend-enemy relations illustrates the impossibility of fixing and restricting such relations and groupings to one specific spatial domain. The way these friend-enemy relations move and unsettle the boundaries of the nation-state which Mouffe and Schmitt tend to treat almost as given, is a challenge to spatial understandings of politics.<sup>30</sup> Examining how friend-enemy groupings move emphasises that the spaces of politics are constantly being negotiated and re-negotiated through the work of political activity.

This in turn suggests that questions around the spaces of politics being mobilised and produced through political activity cannot be relegated to questions of a fixed backdrop but are actually at stake and partially constituted through such action. Pan Africanist organising, for example, challenges 'our understanding of modern politics precisely because it overflow[ed] from the confining structures of the nation state' (Gilroy, 1993: 151). The questions posed by the movement of friend-enemy relations and groupings are not just abstract, theoretical questions. They are integral to the practices and activity of political organising. They are also not unique to the current conjuncture delineated by neoliberal globalisation. There are two main consequences that flow from reworking friend-enemy relations in a way which suggests that political identities and maps of grievance are co-constituted.

Firstly, a stress on the way friend-enemy relations move and follow power relations beyond the fixed boundaries of nation states illustrates how movements construct agency through making wider power relations localisable and contestable. The spatial practices through which adversaries are defined and followed become integral to the ways that friend-enemy relations are formed. The political activity of the Caravan moved as it followed different spatially constituted relations of power. It did so in a way which enabled its political agency and identity to be constructed through dragging relations of power that are not confined within the neat boundaries of nation states into contestation. Following the way friend-enemy relations move as adversaries are defined and located

illustrates some of the processes through which marginalised groups make wider skeins of power relations contestable. The act of rendering these skeins of power part of the terrain of contestation is itself a work of struggle.

Secondly, the particular ways in which maps of grievance can be imagined can have important effects on the kinds of political identities being crafted through such action. This can have effects on the kinds of equivalences which are constructed through this activity. Thus, although the Caravan aspired to the creation of a routed and internationalist version of political friendship, one of the key tensions of the project was the way it reproduced rather than disrupted some very particularist political identities. When Nanjundaswamy complained of India's 'impotence', when BKU activists bullied the two member Nepali contingent of the Caravan in London and tried to prevent both from speaking at the hearing on the grounds that it was an Indian not a Nepali Caravan, the activity of the Caravan refigured fixed and particularist Indian nationalist political identities. This reproduced a fixed spatial imagination of protest which articulated maps of grievances as existing only between rural India and wider power geometries. These relations with these power geometries did not allow equivalences to be made with others struggling against similar power geometries, and was even defined against other participants within the Caravan. This was strengthened by Nanjundaswamy's insistence on the Caravan being overwhelmingly drawn from particular Indian movements.

At its most problematic this produced a kind of internationalism with guarantees which structured the Caravan so that it would tell only a particular Indian story about the effects of globalisation. This constructed only Indian nationalist identities through contestation of neo-liberal globalisation. But the way these militant particularisms moved and were reconfigured also allowed more productive engagements to emerge. This suggests that political identities might be unsettled and positive identifications might be formed through the process. The contestations of nationalism and gender relations in the practice of the Caravan illustrate how the formation of equivalences is ongoing, productive and contested. This contestation led to attempts to form spaces of association that might deploy the subjectivities needed to create anti-homogeneous forms of internationalism. For the ways maps of grievance are imagined and produced through activity are important for differentiating between movements and activities which are defined through forging 'new identities' or 'buttressing existing' national or ethnic identities (Morris-Suzuki, 2000: 82). Engaging with the way maps of grievance are mobilised can suggest whether political activity will refigure hardened and particularistic nationalisms or allow a multiplicity of positive identifications to be formed. José Bové of

the French peasant movement, the Confederation Paysanne threw off the label of 'little Francer' and distanced himself from the French National Front through talking about 'protect[ing] farmers in Africa and Asia' as well as in France (Hattenstone, 2001: 4).

The multiple political identifications conjured by the Zapatista slogan 'one no but many yeses' becomes key to understanding how equivalences are formed. Making multiple positive associations through opposition to power geometries like those of neo-liberal globalisation is a condition for deploying the relatively open forms of subjectivities that are needed for equivalences to be formed. This necessitates transcending the negative sense of identity formation that is often conjured by the friend-enemy distinction. Schmitt adopted a focus on the negative formation of identity through hatred of an enemy, and both Laclau and Mouffe view political identities as being formed primarily through negative identifications (Schmitt, 1963, Laclau, 1994: 3, Mouffe, 1993: 2). The positive identifications which make up friendships and equivalences are far more multiple and cross cutting than this purely negative view of identity formation allows. This suggests a theory of political identity that views friendship as constituted only negatively against enemies is inadequate. Instead it is necessary to view equivalences as 'positive constructions' defined through positive interrelations with other struggles rather than just through negative identifications against enemies (Massey, 1999: 63-64). This permits a focus on the formation of equivalences as simultaneously a rejection of neo-liberal forms of globalisation and an affirmation of solidarities among unlike actors struggling against the same institutions.

A focus on the spatial practices through which these friend-enemy relations are defined emphasises that they are produced through the engagements of political activity, rather than existing fully constituted prior to such activity. The practices through which these relations are produced and reproduced cut across the way that Schmitt and Mouffe assert the conceptual autonomy of the political. Mouffe argues for the importance of 'reflection on the autonomous values of the political' (Mouffe, 1993: 114) and both Mouffe and Schmitt continually define the political against other domains such as the legal and moral (Mouffe, 1993: 114, 1999b: 40, 51, Schmitt, 1963: 27). This assertion of the conceptual autonomy of the political purifies the processes of construction of political identities from the activity of knowing who is a friend or enemy. Derrida argues that Schmitt's abstractions are removed from the activity of knowing the friend or enemy.

If *the* political is to exist, one must know who everyone is, who is a friend and who is an enemy, and this *knowing* is not in the mode of theoretical knowledge but in one of a

*practical identification*; knowing consists here in knowing how to identify the friend and the enemy [...]

(Derrida, 1994: 116, emphasis in original).

The situation is complicated further since the practical identifications ‘seem to be sometimes conditions, sometimes consequences of the identification of friend and enemy’ (ibid.)

In Schmitt’s formulation the political becomes a purified domain which is constitutively separated from the ongoing practices and conduct of political activity. Schmitt defines the friend-enemy groupings of the political against everyday and personalised versions of conflict. He argues the political ‘enemy is not a private adversary who one hates’ (Schmitt 1963: 28). Such a view separates the process of defining adversaries from the kind of unofficial knowledges and experience that I suggested in the last section were key to the processes through which coal heavers and Whiteboys created their maps of grievance. The discussion of the actions of the coal heavers suggests that the processes through which they defined adversaries were not structured by a neat separation between the personal and wider political adversaries. Rather particular and wider power relations were interrelated in these processes. The coal heavers attacked Green’s Tavern, for example, but the antagonistic relations being constructed here were over his conduct, his role as a coal undertaker and his relations with Alderman Beckford. This in turn was related to a wider hostility to the practices of middlemen which was an important idiom of both Irish and English subaltern politics in the mid-eighteenth century<sup>31</sup> (Kenny, 1998: 18-19, Shelton, 1973: 53, Thompson, 1991: 185-258). The friend-enemy relations being discussed in the movements here exceed the limits of a separate sphere denoted as the political. For friend-enemy relations are constituted through the entangled practices of the political rather than through recourse to the purified imagination of the political adopted by Schmitt and Mouffe.

Derrida argues that Schmitt’s attempt ‘to exclude from all other purity (objective, scientific, moral, juridical, psychological, economic, aesthetic, etc.) the purity of the political’ is ‘*a priori* doomed to failure’ (Derrida, 1994: 116). Derrida’s critique of this will to purity resonates with Latour’s critique of the strategies of purification adopted by the modern constitution. Latour argues that it is through ongoing work of purification that the modern constitution has attempted to create ‘two entirely distinct ontological zones’: ‘that of human beings on the one hand; that of non-humans on the other’ (Latour, 1993:

11). Schmitt and Mouffe constitute the 'conceptual autonomy of the political' through such a work of purification. They not only give the political a logic and autonomy separate from other 'spheres' such as the moral or the economic, their work is structured by a specifically human version of what constitutes a political actor, identity or relation.<sup>32</sup> The conduct of different environmentalisms of the poor suggest that friend-enemy relations are formed through more entangled practices than this version of the political allows.

In section 5.2 I argued that the maps of grievance formed by the KRRS in opposition to the Dunkel Draft mobilised unofficial ethical practices which were formed in relation to particular forms of arrangement of collectives of humans and non-humans. Friend-enemy identifications were defined here through practical ethical positions contesting the power relations and networks through which seeds are generated. The KRRS mobilised a defence of the unofficial networks of seed distribution and production in opposition to attempts to establish seed varieties as the sole property of certain Western companies. The friend-enemy relations here are defined through contesting and articulating as unequal, practices which Latour describes as 'enrolment'. He defines enrolment as the techniques through which nonhumans are 'seduced, manipulated or induced into the collective' (Latour, 1994: 46). The friend-enemy relations produced and delineated through the activity of 'environmentalisms of the poor' can be formed in relation to and can generate particular practices of enrolment. The KRRS have been active in denouncing the way the Dunkel Draft envisions plant varieties as being enrolled into collectives as patented life forms. But they have also mobilised and generated different forms of enrolment of non humans through strategies such as the formation of seed banks based on mass-participation of the communities mobilised by KRRS.

Friend-enemy groupings and relations are not formed by actors discussing questions only of human co-existence. The 'practical moral knowledges' through which such identifications are produced and reproduced can also bear on the complicated forms of co-existence between humans and non-humans. The way friend-enemy relations mobilise and generate contestation of specific forms of co-existence dislocates the specifically human political subjects that inhabit the work of Mouffe and Schmitt. But an insistence that friend-enemy relations are constructed through particular ways of engaging with forms of co-existence emphasises that forms of co-existence and arrangement can be defined and produced in antagonistic ways. This has implications for some of the ways that the politics of collectives of humans and non-humans are thought.

Latour's notion of a 'parliament of things' is one of the most sustained attempts to



think through the co-constitution of politics, science and nature. His writing usefully deconstructs the moderns' tendency to denounce through reference to the modern constitution which enabled an 'upper ground for taking a critical stance' through appeals to the purified domains of Nature, Society and God (Latour, 1993: 43). Latour proposes that a rejection of these styles of denunciation can be productive. He argues for the ratification of unofficial forms of morality which have functioned through 'arrangement, combination, *combinazione*, combine but also negotiation or compromise' (Latour, 1993: 45-6). He argues that in a 'parliament of things' the two halves of the modern constitution can be patched together so that 'the imbrolios and networks that had no place now have the whole to place themselves' (Latour, 1993: 144). This does not demand a revolution, for it is simply ratifying 'what we have always done' (ibid.).

This reworking of the political is significant. But I think it is also important to ratify something else which 'we have always done', so as not to exclude this from the constitution of a 'parliament of things'. This is the way that these different combinations and arrangements have been the site of conflict and antagonism. For there are ambiguities about the role of conflict in Latour's reworking of the political. I think these issues can be clarified by thinking through aspects of the politics of collectives with relation to Schmitt and Mouffe's insistence that conflict is a central part of the political. The insights of Mouffe and Schmitt warn us against patching the two halves of the modern constitution back together in a way which is structured by a liberal pluralism which erases antagonism in its search for a rational consensus. For doing this would close down the possibilities opened up by Latour's reworking of the political. Thinking about how forms of human and non-human co-existence have been engaged with in antagonistic ways is also central to understanding the character and agency of diverse environmentalisms of the poor.

## 5.6 Conclusions

This chapter has engaged with attempts to place conflict at the centre of a definition of the political. Drawing on the work of Mouffe and Schmitt I have explored what defining the political in terms of the formation of friend-enemy relations does to an attempt to view the spatial and political as co-constitutive. I have introduced the concept of 'maps of grievance' to spatialise the ongoing practices through which friend-enemy relations are formed. This permits a focus on how friend-enemy relations move, but also on how spatialised power relations are brought into the terrain of contestation through the conduct of political activity. I have argued that how maps of grievance are constructed has effects on the kinds of equivalences that can be crafted through activity and on their durability.

Through developing a focus on the practices through which friend-enemy relations are negotiated the chapter has also begun to articulate those relations to an entangled version of the political. I have argued that, contrary to Mouffe and Schmitt, friend-enemy groupings are formed through engaging with different forms of human/ non human co-existence. This places a focus on how political activity is mobilised through positive and negative relations with particular ways of enrolling non humans into collectives. In making this argument I have drawn on Latour's arguments about the necessity of deconstructing the modern forms of denunciation that structure most political theory. But I have also argued that an insistence on the importance of conflict is necessary to ensure that attempts to patch the two halves of the modern constitution together do not reproduce the power-free pluralism adopted by versions of political liberalism.

This chapter has emphasised that the practices through which maps of grievance are constructed are ongoing and contested and have effects on the political identities that emerge through activity. It has also begun to argue that maps of grievance are constructed through ongoing processes which combine and rearrange the orderings of humans and non humans. Chapter 6 develops this focus on how particular forms of combining and arranging collectives become mobilised and contested through the activity of environmentalisms of the poor. It explores how collective political wills can be formed through mobilising, contesting and reconstituting particular modes of ordering and spatial relations.

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<sup>1</sup> I feel that work which draws on Schmitt even in an adversarial way needs to make explicit the extreme right wing and anti-semitic politics with which he associated his ideas and political commitments. Here I follow Derrida's (1994: 107n4) uncharacteristically clear discussion which stresses the constitutive relation between Schmitt's politics and his political theory. Derrida argues that 'there is an undeniable link between [Schmitt's] thinking of the political and political thought on the one hand and, on the other, Schmitt's political commitments, those which led to his arrest and conviction after the war'. Though Derrida is insistent that these political commitments 'should not distract us from a serious reading'.

<sup>2</sup> For a striking example of the kind of hierarchical mobilisation which characterised the socialist internationals see C.L.R. James' discussion of why George Padmore left the comintern in the 1930s (Hall and James, 1996: 24-5).

<sup>3</sup> The term rhizomorphic solidarities is derived from a reading of Gilroy's use of the work of Deleuze and Guattari in tracing the routed political cultures that traversed the Black Atlantic (Gilroy, 1993, see also Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 3-25).

<sup>4</sup> For an interpretation of Gandhian action as non-hierarchical, see Maxey, 2000: 200. For extensive and detailed critiques of the forms of discipline constructed through Gandhian mobilisation, see Guha, 1997: 100-151, Chatterjee, 1984: 153-195.

<sup>5</sup> ICC/Discussions/16-18/6/1999.

<sup>6</sup> Satyagraha, literally 'exertion for truth', was the term used by Gandhi for nonviolent but illegal campaigns. The use of these tactics develop a continuity between New Farmers Movements and Gandhian struggles.

<sup>7</sup> The Dunkel Draft stated that Plant varieties 'must be protectable either by patents or by a sui generis system (such as the breeders's rights provided in a UPOV [Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plant] convention)' (WTO, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> While the ICC was in London it stayed at Kingsley Hall in Bow where Gandhi had stayed in the 1930s.

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<sup>9</sup> ICC/Discussions/19-20/6/1999.

<sup>10</sup> On the anti urbanism of Gandhian thought and action, see Chatterjee, 1984: 157. This anti-urbanism was constituted through relations with other routes of anti-urban thought. Gandhi drew inspiration from the writings of Tolstoy, Carpenter and Ruskin as well as classical Hindu texts (Chatterjee, 1984: 173)

<sup>11</sup> This formulation of charismatic authority draws on conversations with John Allen.

<sup>12</sup> ICC/Discussions/1-24/3/1999.

<sup>13</sup> In the first meeting I attended there was constant talk of breaking down in to groups around particular themes but this never actually happened, ICC/Discussions/1-24/3/1999.

<sup>14</sup> This shortened name was how Najundaswamy was known through the networks of the ICC.

<sup>15</sup> London Welcoming Committee meeting, ICC/Discussions/6-13/5/1999

<sup>16</sup> This draws on Arun Saldhana's comments about the orientalism of hippy culture, in a talk about Goa to an OU internal geography seminar, December, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> ICC/Discussions/3-8/4/1999

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> ICC/Discussions/20-27/10/1999.

<sup>20</sup> ICC/Discussions/11-29/5/1999.

<sup>21</sup> For an example of the productivist stories of the BKU, see Tikait, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> ICC/Discussions/18-19/6/1999.

<sup>23</sup> ICC/Discussions/1-24/3/1999.

<sup>24</sup> ICC/Discussions/6-13/5/1999.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> On the corrupt relations of the Undertakers, see *The Case of Francis Reynolds* (1764) and *Frauds and Abuses in the Coal-Trade Detected*, (1747).

<sup>27</sup> Girard (1987: 131), for example, defines the scapegoat as the point where spontaneous action intersects with ritual in the transference of anxiety onto an arbitrary victim.

<sup>28</sup> ICC/Discussions/9-28/5/1999.

<sup>29</sup> Schmitt writes of the way 'a people' needs to possess 'energy and will to maintain itself in the sphere of politics' (Schmitt, 1963: 53).

<sup>30</sup> Mouffe, for example, argues that the 'basis for a post-social democratic answer to neo-liberalism [...] could only be carried out successfully in a European context' without analysing some of the ways the European project is defined against Others in deeply problematic ways (Mouffe, 1998: 22-23).

<sup>31</sup> Shared resistance to 'the hordes of corn factors, butter merchants, cattle dealers, jobbers and contractors of all sorts' were the practices through which Irish intellectuals like Bronterre O'Brien involved in the Chartist movement imagined alliances between British and Irish workers (O'Brien, [1838] 1948: 245).

<sup>32</sup> Mouffe defines the political as the 'organisation of human co-existence' (Mouffe, 1998: 16).

## Chapter 7:

### Conclusions

At the end of his novel *Duffy is Dead*, Jerry O'Neill describes the coal whippers who once 'groped for coal and scrap' in the Thames' mud as 'friendly-ghosts' (O'Neill, 1987: 186). The 'friendly ghosts' of the Whiteboys and the diverse riverside labourers active in the London Port strikes of 1768 have been an important source of inspiration for the arguments of this thesis. Engaging with the activity of these groups has helped to assert the importance of the histories and geographies of subaltern engagements with environments. Telling stories about the political activity of these groups can also help animate contemporary political imaginaries. This is not because the activity of these movements provides anything like a fixed blueprint that can be applied to contemporary situations. Rather examining the activity of these movements can situate contemporary political struggles as part of a continuity of engagement with spatially stretched and unequally constituted power relations.

There is much in the conduct of these historical movements that I, as a contemporary researcher, find unpalatable. The violent forms of intimidation of both humans and animals. The assaults on spalpeens. The male bound character of many of the emergent forms of solidarity they mobilised. But these struggles also engaged with emerging, hostile power-geometries in innovative ways. They contested the unequal relations through which these power-geometries were generating and socialising materials, spaces and animals. Further, they contested these power-geometries through shaping their own heterogeneous alliances, solidarities and political constituencies. These concerns about how to negotiate hostile power-geometries, about how to form alliances, about how to socialise non humans have significant resonances with the concerns of contemporary oppositional politics.

For significantly these struggles contested the formation of trans-national power-geometries through celebrating more than the 'parochial' and the 'local' in opposition to these relations. The spaces of politics they formed were not bounded. Their political activity was often defined by the formation of equivalences and solidarities between unlike actors with diverse experiences and routes of activity. These forms of resistance have resources for engaging with claims that contemporary neo-liberal globalisation is politically debilitating. The 'hyper mobile' forces of capital are frequently defined against settled subaltern groups, who, trapped into bounded patterns of existence, are somehow inherently not internationalist or cosmopolitan (for an example of such an account, see Starr, 2000: 218-219). Telling stories about the political identities formed by mobile, 'motley' groups of labourers in the mid-eighteenth century emphasises the vibrancy of

traditions of organisation which have opposed unequal power-geometries through mobilising multi-ethnic co-operation and solidarities.

The histories and geographies of these past struggles undermine the dream of opposing neo-liberal globalisation with small, bounded communities characterised by harmonious, 'natural' relations. These histories emphasise how past struggles have been located at the intersections of different relations, different routes of activity. There is little space for purity or bounded relations in these traditions of resistance. They suggest the importance of countering oppressive, hostile power relations in ways which celebrate the connections and intersections of diverse routes and traditions of resistance. The inspiration of these past struggles can suggest the importance of recognising connections and exchanges as an integral part of the political identities produced and deployed through contemporary struggles.

These 'motley' traditions of resistance thus have resources for engaging with some of the tensions emerging through contemporary forms of counter-globalisation politics. One of the tensions that emerged powerfully from the engagement with the Inter-Continental Caravan was that there were contrasting ways of setting up opposition to neo-liberal globalisation. There were tensions which flowed from the ways some of this opposition mobilised an imagination structured by particularistic versions of nationalism. This imagination celebrated natural, bounded organic communities in opposition to a contemporary globalisation which is seen as foreign or other. The adoption of these bounded political alternatives tended to work against an active celebration of the way alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation are being produced at the intersection of different routes of activity.

These tensions have significant implications for the ways that 'maps of grievance' are constructed and articulated through counter-globalisation politics. Tensions over how opposition to neo-liberal globalisation is imagined, however, have not been given prominence in many critical discussions of the directions of counter-globalisation protest (Brecher et al., 2000, Cockburn and St. Clair, 2000, Starr, 2000, for an important exception, see Morris-Suzuki, 2000). In movement debates these tensions seem to have been eclipsed by arguments over whether the tactics being used are non-violent.<sup>1</sup> But tensions over how resistance to globalisation is imagined are arguably as important as these discussions. The intersections which have made movements like the Inter-continental Caravan innovative forms of political activity even seem to have been undermined by the marginalisation of non-Western voices of resistance in events like the Seattle demonstrations (Harindranath, 2000: 161, Hensman, 2000: 1247-1254).

Re-imagining resistance is important because the ways in which the power-geometries of neo-liberal globalisation are imagined relate intrinsically to different alternative political imaginaries. Thinking about whether resistance to globalisation is to be constituted through uncritically valorising 'tradition', the local and the nation in opposition to transnational networks or is to be constituted through equivalences between unlike actors is of central importance to engaging with the political identities formed through counter-globalisation politics. How these maps of grievance are formed and negotiated relate to critical issues about the kinds of alternatives imagined and brought into being through these political interventions.

These different ways of imagining the power-geometries of globalisation have important effects and relate to vastly differing ways of imagining the political. The first case imagines opposition to globalisation as merely a work of 'restoration' of communities that were sites of harmonious social and environmental relations. In this account these bounded communities have been made unequal and riven simply by their inclusion in spatially stretched relations. Here it is not just neo-liberal institutions and governments that become problematic, but potentially all others from outside these bounded communities. This position suggests that there is not a political engagement to be had at all. Perfect societies will emerge merely through the formation of communities at the right scale.

An alternative position can be sketched through adopting a relational account of power. Here maps of grievance are constructed through drawing on the experiences of diverse forms of resistance struggling against the power-geometries of neo-liberal globalisation. There are histories and geographies to these engagements. But there is also a potential openness. These forms of political engagement are not simply seeking to restore ecological selves located in the past. They are seeking to experiment with new forms of socialising collectives of humans and non-humans. The status of alliances here is not merely a means towards the creation of small, harmonious communities. Rather intersections and alliances can be integral to the kinds of political identities that are shaped through such engagements. These connections rather than just generating a larger movement can also produce the unsettling and transformation of identities which Laclau and Mouffe envisioned by the term equivalences.

These forms of political engagement need not be subordinated to the desire to form a common program or project. The plurality of the multiple political constituencies brought together through opposition to neo-liberal globalisation precludes this. Rather they might be thought of as engaging in forms of collective experimentation which are antagonistic to the collective experiments orchestrated by neo-liberal globalisation. These alternative experiments might be characterised as imagining, producing and engaging with 'less

hostile order[s] of relationships among people, animals, technologies and land' (Haraway, 1989: 15). Situating these experiments and engagements at the intersection of different routes of resistance can be productive. It can begin to disrupt the mantle of purity that has so often been adopted by environmentalisms.

The ICC, through locating opposition to genetically modified seeds at the intersection of diverse trajectories of resistance, brought together different ways of opposing these forms of biotechnology. It produced idioms of opposition which dislocated, if only in small ways, the way that opposition to genetic modification has so often been powerfully articulated to a 'fear of the alien and suspicion of the mixed' (Haraway, 1997: 61). This is a partial example. But it suggests how locating resistance at the intersection of different routes of activity can begin to change the kinds of stories and engagements opened up by these forms of resistance in important ways. It also suggests that the equivalences formed through bringing together different routes of activity might unsettle existing ways of socialising non-humans. Locating resistance to neo-liberal globalisation at the intersection of these different trajectories can also begin to make the power relations produced through this resistance explicit.

One of the key engagements of the thesis has been to locate resistance within cross-cutting relations of power. This has implications for the conduct of struggles. They can no longer persuasively depict themselves as being without power. Rather they are subject to the challenges of how to negotiate, generate and handle power relations. Celebrations of bounded communities as a privileged and authentic site of resistance tend to view power relations as existing only externally to these communities. This makes it difficult to engage with the ambiguous position of subaltern engagements in both contesting and instituting power-geometries. It makes it hard to envision how engaging with the ambiguous character of subaltern political activity can become part of the political identities produced through these engagements. Adopting an imagination of resistance as constituted through equivalences between unlike actors makes it much more likely that these power relations can be made explicit and up for negotiation.

For a politics which celebrates its location at the intersection of diverse trajectories of resistance has to engage with ways of negotiating relations of power between and within these trajectories. This opens up the possibility that these power relations will not be seen as something that merely contaminates the political identities produced through such activity. It suggests ways of viewing power relations as productive of the very character of these identities. Further, such an imagination might make it possible to negotiate how power relations are handled through the practices adopted by these alternative forms of collective experimentation. For, as the discussion of the tensions of the land occupation

suggested, the power relations constructed through various joint actions cannot be negotiated merely by the actions of isolated, reflexive subjects. Rather these collective experiments might be deployed and envisioned in ways which might make power relations part of the terrain of contestation. For tensions emerge through the conduct of joint action as the tensions over gender and nationalism in the ICC, or the tensions over how to integrate marginalised urban groups into the conduct of the land occupation suggest. Power relations can be refigured as something to be handled and negotiated through these joint actions. Making power relations explicit refigures the work of experimenting with these tensions as part of the ongoing production and reproduction of the political, rather than something that should be eradicated by the formation of a harmonious consensus.

The environmentalisms of the poor discussed here are forms of collective experimentation which do not offer a fixed blueprint for transformation. Rather they have opened up a set of ongoing and contested engagements which explore how a politics of social justice and environmentalism might be creatively intertwined. They have achieved this despite a myriad of political and theoretical divisions which have conspired to make such a politics unimaginable and unrepresentable. The agency they have constructed is diverse, contested and significant. Through locating political activity at the intersections of diverse routes of resistance, these engagements have unsettled assumptions that bounded forms of political activity are the most desirable ways of opposing neo-liberal globalisation. Through drawing on these multiple histories and geographies of resistance collective experiments which exceed and oppose the restrictive, limiting tenets of neo-liberalism will continue to be generated.

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<sup>1</sup>For a sense of these often vitriolic debates see the ongoing discussions over the status of violent and non-violent tactics on the social movements email list. These discussions are archived at <http://www.iol.ie/~mazzoldi/toolsforchange/sm.html>.



**Appendix 1:**

**List of Archive of Field Notes**

**Notes relating to the Land is Ours**

TLIO/Discussions/1-3/5/1996      Discussions on first day of occupation at Gargoyle Wharf.

TLIO/Discussions/2-15/10/1996      Discussions on the day of eviction at Gargoyle Wharf.

TLIO/Discussions/3-10-12/4/1997      Discussions at Land is Ours national gathering at Shipton on Cherwell.

TLIO/Discussions/4-1/6/1997      Discussions at Planning For Real at Joseph Tritton Primary School, Wandsworth and notes made on the process with Jon Hallé.

TLIO/Discussions/5-15/1/1999      Planning Meeting for Diggers 350 Action at Conway Hall, London.

TLIO/Discussions/6-18/8/1999      Discussions about the wasteland ecology of Gargoyle Wharf with Peter Guest of London Wildlife Trust.

TLIO/Interview/1-20/5/1999.      Interview with Bruce Mackenzie at his room in Tooting Bec.

## **Notes relating to the Inter-Continental Caravan**

### **Notes on London Welcoming Committee Planning Meetings at Strike Fashion Street, London**

ICC/Discussions/1-24/3/1999.	Meeting on 24 <sup>th</sup> March, 1999.
ICC/Discussions/2-1/4/1999.	Meeting on 1 <sup>st</sup> April, 1999.
ICC/Discussions/3-8/4/1999.	Meeting on 8 <sup>th</sup> April, 1999.
ICC/Discussions/4-15/4/1999.	Meeting on 15 <sup>th</sup> April, 1999.
ICC/Discussions/5-6/5/1999.	Meeting on 6 <sup>th</sup> May, 1999.
ICC/Discussions/6-13/5/1999.	Meeting on 13 <sup>th</sup> May, 1999.
ICC/Discussions/7-20/5/1999.	Meeting on 13 <sup>th</sup> May, 1999.

### **Notes on ICC in London.**

ICC/Discussions/8-27/5/1999	Welcoming Discussion at Kingsley Hall, London.
ICC/Discussions/9-28/5/1999	Public Hearing at Friends House, Euston Road, London.
ICC/Discussions/10-28/5/1999	Demonstration outside the Nuffield Foundation, Bedford Square.
ICC/Discussions/11-29/5/1999	Visit to Genetics Crop Squat, Near Bishop's Stoptford, Hertfordshire.

## **Notes on ICC in Cologne**

ICC/Discussions/12-16/6/1999	Discussions on arrival at Resistance Camp by the Rhine in Cologne.
ICC/Discussions/13-17/6/1999	Preparation for and arrival of ICC in Cologne.
ICC/Discussions/14-18/6/1999	Planning Meeting for June 18 <sup>th</sup> Actions.
ICC/Discussions/15-18/6/1999	Demonstration outside Bayer Plant in Leverkusen.
ICC/Discussions/16-18/6/1999	Siege in the Bolternstrasse Tram Station.
ICC/Discussions/17-18/6/1999	Demonstration/ Vigil Outside Main Police Station in Cologne
ICC/Discussions/18-19/6/1999	March Against the G8 Summit.
ICC/Discussions/19-20/6/1999	Discussions about the general character of the ICC.

## **Notes on London Welcoming Committee Evaluation of the ICC.**

ICC/Discussions/20-27/10/1999.	Evaluation of London Welcoming Committee of the ICC at Kingsley Hall, London.
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## **Appendix 2: References**

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Berrow's Worcester Journal abbreviated as BWJ

Dublin Magazine

Faulkner's Dublin Journal abbreviated as FDJ

Freeman's Journal

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